

BALLADS AND TALES



GOLDEN

ROD

BOOKS

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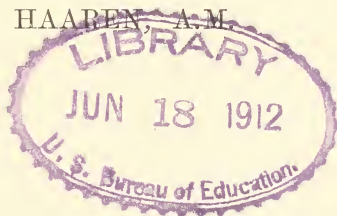
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BALLADS AND TALES

FOURTH READER GRADE

COMPILED AND ADAPTED BY

JOHN H. HAAREN, A.M.



NEW YORK AND NEW ORLEANS
UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING CO.

1896

GOLDEN ROD BOOKS

GRADED READINGS FOR SCHOOL OR HOME

RHYMES AND FABLES
SONGS AND STORIES
FAIRY LIFE
BALLADS AND TALES

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Press of J. J. Little & Co.
Astor Place, New York

PREFACE.

THE selections of this little volume are made from the more familiar and popular ballads and tales relating to historic or legendary incidents and personages that have become famous in literature.

A ballad, originally sung by harpers and minstrels, is a simple, spirited narrative poem arranged in short stanzas, and aims to represent to the imagination with vividness and truth the incidents or natural emotions which it attempts to portray. The early ballads of all nations were founded upon historical incident, but always highly colored by the singer according to his taste and imagination. The ballads that have come down to us were growths rather than direct creations. They are the work of several hands, and the result of many successive adaptations. The compiler has endeavored to select ballads that tell a plain story, and have at the same time some of the spirit and ring which we naturally look for in compositions of this kind.

After the invention of printing, many heroic incidents which before would have been depicted in

ballads only, were narrated in tales to be read. In these, the mesh of adventure and romance that has been woven about the heroes of olden time has completely hidden their true personality. They have been made the subject of so many tales, and their deeds have been so freely sung, that it is impossible to separate fiction from reality. Heroes have come down to us having little except their names in common with their originals, but they have a permanent place in literature, even though they differ from the characters that history has been able to reveal to us.

Such selections as these, put into the hands of the young, will tend to foster a wholesome enjoyment of reading and to develop a fondness for books. They introduce the young reader to some of the names and deeds of the olden time, which are constantly referred to in our standard and current literature.

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BALLADS AND TALES.



WHEN Robin Hood was about twenty
years old,
He happened to meet Little John,
A jolly brisk blade, right fit for the trade,
For he was a lusty young man.

Though he was called little, his limbs they were
large,

And his stature was seven foot high ;
Wherever he came, they quaked at his name,
For soon he would make them to fly.

How they came acquainted I'll tell you in brief,
If you would but listen awhile ;
For this very jest, among all the rest,
I think, may cause you to smile.

For Robin Hood said to his jolly bowmen,
“Pray tarry you here in this grove,
And see that you all observe well my call,
While through the forest I rove.

“We've had no sport these fourteen long days,
Therefore now abroad will I go ;
Now should I be beat, and cannot retreat,
My horn I will presently blow.”

Then did he shake hands with his merry men
all,
And bid them at present good-by ;
Then as near a brook his journey he took,
A stranger he chanced so espy.

They happened to meet on a long narrow bridge,
And neither of them would give way;
Quoth bold Robin Hood, and sturdily stood,
"I'll show you right Nottingham play."

With that from his quiver an arrow he drew,
A broad arrow with a goose wing;
The stranger replied, "I'll liquor * thy hide,
If thou offer to touch the string."

Quoth bold Robin Hood, "Thou dost prate like
an ass,
For, were I to bend but my bow,
I could send a dart quite through thy proud
heart,
Before thou could'st strike me one blow."

"Thou talk'st like a coward," the stranger replied;
"Well armed with your long bow you stand,
To shoot at my breast, while I, I protest,
Have naught but a staff in my hand."

"The name of a coward," quoth Robin, "I scorn,
Therefore my long bow I'll lay by;
And now, for thy sake, a staff will I take,
The truth of thy manhood to try."

* Moisten, drench.

Then Robin Hood stepped to a thicket of trees,
And chose him a staff of ground oak;
Now this being done, away he did run
To the stranger, and merrily spoke:

“Lo! see my staff is lusty and tough;
Now here on the bridge we will play;
Whoever falls in, the other shall win
The battle, and so we’ll away.”

“With all my whole heart!” the stranger replied;
“I scorn in the least to give out.”
This said, they fell to ’t without more dispute,
And their staffs they did flourish about.

At first Robin gave the stranger a bang,
So hard that he made his bones ring;
The stranger he said, “This must be repaid;
I’ll give you as good as you bring.

“So long as I’m able to handle a staff,
To die in your debt, friend, I scorn.”
Then to it each goes, and followed their blows,
As if they had been threshing of corn.

The stranger gave Robin a crack on the crown,
Which caused the blood to appear;
Then Robin enraged more fiercely engaged,
And followed his blows more severe.

So thick and so fast did he lay it on him,
With a passionate fury and ire,
At every stroke he made him to smoke,
As if he had been all on fire.

O then in a fury the stranger he grew,
And gave him a terrible look;
Then dealt him a blow, which laid him full low,
And tumbled him into the brook.

"I prithee, good fellow, O where art thou now?"
The stranger, in laughter, he cried;
Quoth bold Robin Hood, "Good faith! in the
flood,
And floating along with the tide.

"I needs must acknowledge thou art a brave
soul,
With thee I'll no longer contend;
For needs must I say thou hast got the day,
Our battle shall be at an end."

Then unto the bank he did presently wade,
And pulled him out by a thorn ;
Which done, at the last he blew a loud blast
Straightway on his fine bugle horn :

The echo of which thro' the valleys did fly,
At which his stout bowmen appeared,
All clothèd in green, most gay to be seen ;
So up to their master they steered.

“O, what is the matter?” quoth Will Stutely,
“Good master, you're wet to the skin !”
“No matter,” quoth he, “the lad which you see,
In fighting hath tumbled me in.”

“He shall not go scot-free,” the others replied,
So straight they were seizing him there,
To duck him likewise, but Robin Hood cries,
“He is a stout fellow ; forbear !

“There's no one shall wrong thee, friend, be not
afraid ;
These bowmen upon me do wait :
There's three score and nine ; if thou wilt be
mine,
Thou shalt have my livery straight,

“And other accoutrements fit for a man:

Speak up, jolly blade, never fear;
I'll teach you also the use of the bow,
To shoot at the fat fallow deer.”

“O, here is my hand,” the stranger replied,

“I'll serve you with all my whole heart:
My name is John Little, a man of good mettle;
Ne'er doubt me, for I'll play my part.”

“His name shall be altered,” quoth Will Stutely,

“And I will his godfather be;
Prepare then a feast, and none of the least,
For we will be merry,” quoth he.

They presently fetched him a brace of fat does,

With humming strong liquor likewise:
They loved what was good; so in the green wood
This pretty sweet babe they baptized.

He was, I must tell you, but seven feet high,

And may be an ell in the waist;
A sweet pretty lad; much feasting they had,
Bold Robin the christening graced,

With all his bowmen, which stood in a ring,
And were of the Nottingham breed.



Brave Stutely came
then with seven
yéomen,
And did in this
manner pro-
ceed :

“This infant was
called John
Little,” quoth
he,
“ Which name shall
be changed
anon :

The words we’ll transpose ; so wherever he goes,
His named shall be called Little John.”

They all with a shout made the elements ring,
As soon as the office was o’er ;
To feasting they went, with true merriment,
Such joy was ne’er seen before.

Then Robin he took the pretty sweet babe,
And clothed him from top to toe
In garments of green, most gay to be seen,
And gave him a curious long bow.

“Thou shalt be an archer as well as the best,
And range in the green wood with us,
Where we'll not want gold, nor silver, behold,
While travelers have aught in their purse.

“We live here like squires or lords of renown,
Without e'er a foot of free land;
We feast on good cheer, throughout the whole year,
With everything at our command.”

Then music and dancing did furnish the day:
At length, when the sun waned low,
Then all the whole train their grove did refrain,
With unto their caves they did go.

And so ever after, as long as they lived,
Although he was proper and tall,
Yet, nevertheless, the truth to express,
Still Little John they did him call.

THE TRUE AND THE FALSE PRINCE.

ONCE there was a king of Naples who was so stern and cruel that his subjects, and even his family, found it very hard to retain their love and respect for him. This king had a son named Ros-

wal, who was beloved by everyone because of his noble and generous disposition. One day while the young prince was passing the tower he heard groans coming from the dungeon below. On inquiry he learned that three noble lords were there, condemned to life-long imprisonment for having refused to obey some unreasonable command of the king.

This grieved the tender-hearted Roswal, and he determined to free the prisoners, even though his act should provoke his father's fiercest anger. Ob-

serving that the keys of the prison were each night placed under the king's pillow, Roswal watched for an opportunity, and finally succeeded in withdrawing them while his father was asleep. Hastening to the dungeon, he released the prisoners, and then replaced the



keys without disturbing the king.

On the following day when the jailers went to the dungeon with the usual supply of food and water for the prisoners, they were astonished to find

the cells vacant. In fear and trembling they reported the fact to the king, who was convulsed with rage. In a moment of passion he vowed that whoever had aided the prisoners to escape should be put to death.

An investigation was at once begun, but nothing was discovered. No one suspected Roswal, but he began to fear that perhaps some innocent person might suffer for his act; so he went to his father and confessed what he had done. When the king learned that it was his own son who had interfered with his plans for vengeance his anger greatly increased. For a long time neither the tears of the queen nor his love for the young prince could induce the king to recall his vow. Finally he spared his son's life, but banished him from Naples.

The king ordered his high steward, who was one of his favorite officers, to accompany Roswal as a guardian and companion during his exile. This steward was very fond of the pleasures of a life at court, and did not relish being compelled to share the banishment of the young prince. As soon as they left Naples he began to upbraid Roswal, and to blame him for the misfortunes which had fallen upon both. To these complaints Roswal paid no attention, for he felt that no matter what might befall him, he had the satisfaction of knowing that he

had restored to life and liberty three of the noblest men in the kingdom.

When the steward saw that his taunts had no effect on Roswal, he began devising some plan by which he could turn the present misfortunes to his own advantage. He knew that the king had given his son certain letters which would secure him a proper reception at a friendly court, and also jewels and money to support him in princely style. The steward decided that he would get possession of the papers and valuables and then present himself at some court as the heir to the crown of Naples. Having thus formed his plan, he watched for an opportunity to carry it out.

One day Roswal and the steward were traveling in a strange region, when they came to a river, and Roswal stooped to drink at the water's edge. The crafty steward saw his opportunity. He seized the prince by the heels and threatened to hurl him into the river if he did not give up the papers and treasure, and promise never to reveal what had occurred. Roswal was forced to yield. The steward secured the property and at once galloped away, taking Roswal's horse with him.

At first Roswal was overcome with grief, but after some thought he concluded that he was fortunate in escaping from such an evil and disagreeable

companion. Being hungry and weary, he began to look for some place where he could obtain food and shelter. Before long he reached a comfortable cottage where he was kindly received by the good dame. She questioned him as to who he was and whence he came. These were hard questions for Roswal. He could not tell why he had been driven from



home, without blaming his father. He could not tell who he was, without breaking his promise to the steward. He was too noble to blame his father or break his promise, so he simply said that through misfortune he had no home and no friends. This satisfied the good woman's curiosity, and he soon became such a favorite with her that she adopted him as a companion to her son. Roswal was sent to the village school, and here he astonished everyone by his remarkable knowledge. The fame of his talents soon spread, and a nobleman of the country took him to court as his page.

At court, Roswal's noble character and learning

won for him many friends, and he had not been there many days when he was appointed cup-bearer to the king's daughter, the Princess Lilian, a beautiful girl a little younger than himself.

Meanwhile the treacherous steward had not been idle. With his stolen letters he had presented himself as the Prince of Naples at the same court to which Roswal afterwards came as a page. By his cunning he had imposed on the king and obtained the promise of the hand of his daughter in marriage. Forthwith an embassy had been sent to secure the consent of the King of Naples to the marriage of his supposed son.

Such was the state of affairs when Roswal reached the court as the nobleman's page. He was at once recognized by the false prince, who, however, was not alarmed, because he knew that Roswal would not break his promise. In the course of time the ambassadors returned from Naples, bearing the consent of the king, and soon the court was astir with preparations for the marriage.

The Princess Lilian did not rejoice at her approaching wedding, for she disliked the false prince, and had given her heart to her young cup-bearer. She suspected that he was of noble birth, but he evaded all her questions regarding himself.

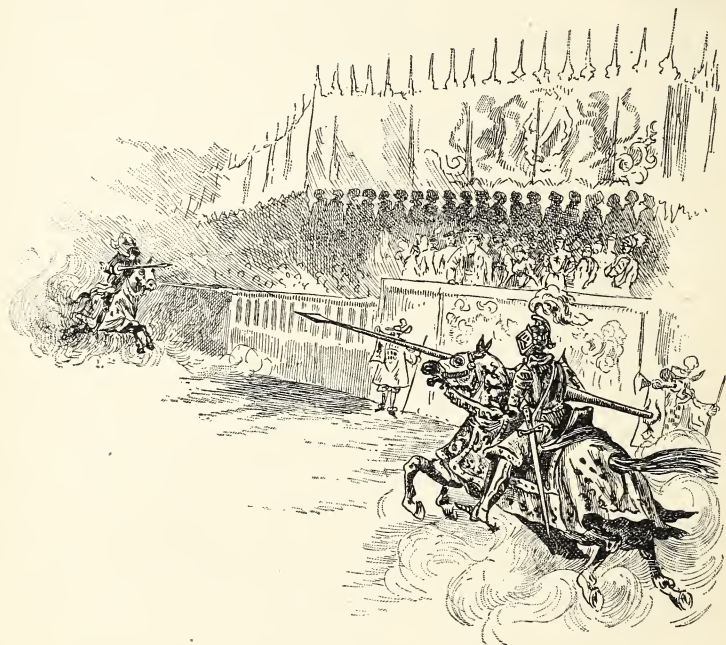
The marriage festivities were to begin with a

tournament, into which the princess begged Roswal to enter, but he pleaded ignorance of these knightly contests. Day by day he grew more moody and silent. When the morning of the first tournament arrived, he mounted his horse and went into the forest to hunt, so that he might not witness the triumph of his enemy. As he rode sadly along, an old knight appeared, leading a black horse, from the saddle of which a suit of black armor was hanging. "Prince," said the knight, "put on this armor, mount this horse, and repair to the tournament. When you return I shall be here with your bag filled with game."

Roswal put on the armor, leaped upon the horse, and rode to the tourney. He entered the lists and easily overthrew all his opponents. He then charged upon the false prince, who became so stricken with fear that he was unable to defend himself. Roswal generously spared his enemy, saluted the assembly, and rode away. The sudden appearance of this strange knight, and his easy victory over all who opposed him, greatly astonished all; but every effort to learn who he was, or whence he came, proved useless.

The next day Roswal again went into the forest to hunt. This time he met a second knight, dressed like his friend of the previous day, but leading a

gray horse. He gave the horse and a suit of gray armor to Roswal, instructing him to again enter the lists. The cowardly steward, made bold by the absence of the knight on the black steed, hastened



to attack the new knight, but with no better success than that of the day before. After eclipsing all the contestants by his deeds of valor, the gray knight disappeared suddenly, and left the court in such a high state of excitement and curiosity that the king promised an earldom to the man who could find the strange knight.

While no one could solve the mystery, Princess Lilian thought she detected a strong resemblance between the two strange knights and Roswal; yet how was it that Roswal returned both evenings with his game-bag full?

On the third day another knight met Roswal in the forest, and delivered to him a bay horse, a red shield, green armor, and golden helmet. Thus gorgeously equipped, he joined the festivities, and by his wonderful feats conquered all antagonists. He then tossed a gold ring into the lap of the princess and rode away. When he reached the forest he found the three knights awaiting him. They told him that they were the three noblemen whom he had released from his father's dungeon.

They knew the story of his exile, and assured him that the fair princess should not become the wife of the wicked impostor. Roswal returned to court more hopeful than before.

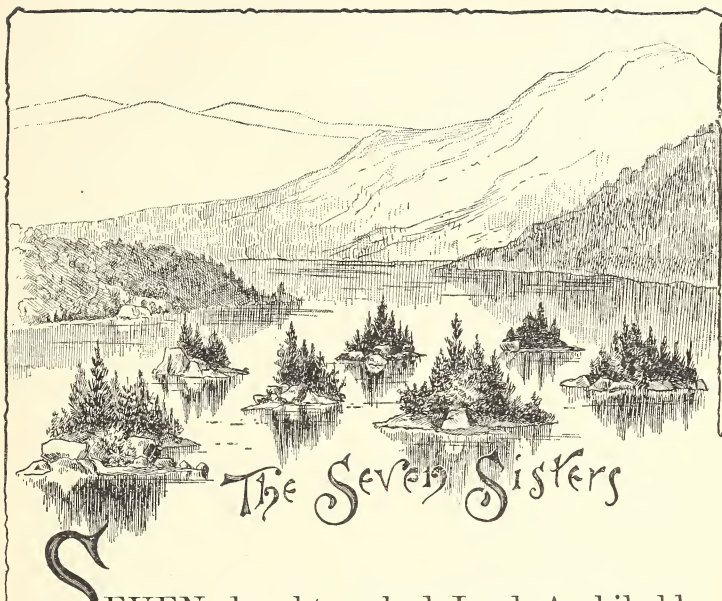
The next day was fixed for the wedding. The guests were assembled in the palace, and the ceremony was about to begin, when suddenly three magnificently dressed strangers entered the spacious hall, and bowed before the king and his daughter, without appearing to notice the steward. They announced that they were nobles from the court of Naples. Before they proceeded further the king

rebuked them, and asked in angry tones why they had not saluted their prince, the heir to the throne of Naples. They responded that they did not see the Prince of Naples in the hall. At that moment Roswal entered. The three noblemen fell on their knees before him and kissed his hand, showing great love and respect for him.



Great was the astonishment when the nobles told their story, and the king learned that Roswal was not only the true prince, but also the knight who had shown such courage on the three days of the tournament. The false prince confessed his treachery, and was hurried away to life-long imprisonment. Roswal, who had loved the princess from the first, now claimed her hand, and the wedding was celebrated that day.

Thus did the true prince at last regain his rank. In after years, as King of Naples, he won the love and respect of his subjects, and was known far and near as a just and charitable sovereign.



The Seven Sisters

SEVEN daughters had Lord Archibald,
 All children of one mother;

I could not say in one short day
 What love they bore each other.

A garland of seven lilies wrought!

Seven sisters that together dwell;

But he, bold knight as ever fought,
 Their father, took of them no thought,

He loved the wars so well.

*Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
 The solitude of Binnorie!*

Fresh blows the wind, a western wind,
And from the shores of Erin,
Across the wave, a rover brave
To Binnorie is steering;
Right onward to the Scottish strand
The gallant ship is borne;
The warriors leap upon the land,
And hark! the leader of the band
Hath blown his bugle horn.
*Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!*

Beside a grotto of their own,
With boughs above them closing,
The seven are laid, and in the shade
They lie like fawns reposing.
But now, upstarting with affright
At noise of man and steed,
Away they fly to left, to right—
Of your fair household, father knight,
Methinks you take small heed!
*Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!*

Some close behind, some side by side,
Like clouds in stormy weather,
They run, and cry, "Now let us die,
And let us die together."

A lake was near; the shore was steep;
There never foot had been;
They ran, and with a desperate leap
Together plunged into the deep,
Nor evermore were seen.

*Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!*

The stream that flows out of the lake,
As through the glen it rambles,
Repeats a moan o'er moss and stone,
For those seven lovely Campbells.
Seven little islands, green and bare,
Have risen from out the deep.
The fishers say, those sisters fair
By fairies all are buried there,
And there together sleep.

*Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!*

—W. WORDSWORTH.

LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR.

ARTHUR, the great hero of romance, was the son of Uther Pendragon, or Dragon's Head, king of all England. At the birth of the prince, Merlin the magician came to the king, and begged to be

allowed to take the child, to train him for the duties of a king. The request was granted and



the child was given to Merlin, who had him baptized under the name of Arthur. He was then placed in care of Sir Ector, an esteemed knight, and his lady, and brought up as their son. No person but Merlin, King Uther, and the mother, Queen Igraine,

knew the secret of Arthur's birth, and even the Queen did not know what had become of him.

While Arthur was still a boy his father died and the country was thus left without a king. Uther at the time of his death was supposed to be childless, and Arthur was regarded as the son of Sir Ector. Many of the lords were ambitious, and, as they were brave and powerful, it looked as though the kingdom would be broken up by internal strife. But Merlin was wise and the people respected him; and he requested the archbishop of Canterbury to summon all the lords to London on Christmas Day. The archbishop did so, and there was a large assembly of lords

and their retainers in the great church of Canterbury.

Outside the church, on the side nearest the altar, a large stone had been seen that morning, and upon it was a steel anvil, in which was stuck, almost to the hilt, a glittering sword. On the anvil were written in letters of gold the words, "Whoso pulleth out this sword is true-born king of all England." After the service in the church, the lords and people crowded around the stone in wonder and surprise. Many lords tried to pull out the weapon, but they could not.

"The man is not here," said the archbishop, "who shall draw out this sword, but I doubt not God will make him known."

It was then announced that a further trial would be given on New Year's Day, and that all who wished might try to draw out the sword.

On New Year's Day the lords and people assembled again, and among them were Sir Ector, Arthur's foster-father, and his son, Sir Kay. Again many tried to pull out the sword, but in vain. Then a tournament was held in which there were encounters between many brave knights. In one of these encounters the sword of Sir Kay, the foster-brother of Arthur, was broken, and Arthur was sent for another weapon. Passing the church,

and seeing the sword stuck in the anvil, he advanced, and easily drew out the weapon. Then he took it to Sir Kay, who, knowing it well, rode to Sir Ector, and said: "Lo, here is the sword of the stone."

Sir Ector asked Sir Kay who gave him the sword. "My brother Arthur," said he, "gave it to me."

"How got you this sword?" said Sir Ector to Arthur.

"When my brother Sir Kay sent me for a sword, I passed by the church, and seeing this sticking in an anvil of steel set on a large stone, I drew it forth."

"Found you any knights about the weapon?"

"Nay," said Arthur.

"Now," said Sir Ector, "must you be king of this land; for else you could never have drawn out this sword. Let us go to the church, and see whether you can put the sword where it was and pull it out again."

They advanced to the church, and Arthur put the sword into the anvil. Then Sir Ector tried to pull it out and failed. Likewise Sir Kay tried and failed.

"Now try you," said Sir Ector to Arthur.

Arthur pulled it out easily. Thereupon Sir Ector and Sir Kay kneeled down to the earth.

"Alas! mine own dear father and brother, why kneel ye to me?" cried Arthur.

“Nay, nay, my lord Arthur,” answered Sir Ector, “I am not your father. Merlin brought you to us, and we adopted you without knowing anything of your parentage. Now I know that you are of royal blood.”

Then Sir Ector, taking Sir Kay and Arthur with him, went to the archbishop and told him everything. Just then Merlin entered the room and declared that Arthur was Uther’s son. The archbishop counselled them to silence, and then announced to the lords and people that a further trial would be given on Twelfth Day.*

On Twelfth Day the knights assembled again. But of all that made the attempt none could draw out the sword but Arthur. Then the lords were angry, and said that it would be a shame to them and to the realm to be governed by a boy who was not of royal birth. They then agreed that the sword should be put back, and another trial was set down for Candlemas Day.† In the meantime ten knights were appointed to watch the sword day and night.

Candlemas Day arrived, and again a great many knights made the attempt to withdraw the sword. They all failed, but Arthur again drew it forth with the greatest ease.

* Twelfth day after Christmas, January 6th.

† February 2d.

Much chagrined, the lords demanded a further trial on Easter Day. It was granted, and as Arthur had done before, so did he at Easter. Still indignant that Arthur should be king, the lords insisted



that a fifth trial be set down for Pentecost.* Then, lest some attempt should be made on Arthur's life, the archbishop, by Merlin's advice, selected a number of knights who had been most loved and trusted

* Seventh Sunday after Easter.

by Uther, and placed them as a guard about Arthur. To them the secret of his parentage had been told, and they remained constantly with him till the feast of Pentecost.

At Pentecost again none but Arthur could draw forth the sword. Then the people, disregarding the wishes of the lords, cried out with one voice: "Arthur shall be our king! We will have no further delay! It is God's will that he should reign over us!"

The lords now fell on their knees before Arthur, and craved mercy for having opposed him so long. He freely forgave them, and laying the sword on the altar, was crowned king by the archbishop. Arthur swore to be a true king, and to administer the affairs of his kingdom with justice.

ARTHUR'S VICTORIES OVER THE REBELLIOUS KINGS.

As soon as Arthur was seated on the throne of England the many wrongs that had been done since the death of King Uther were righted, lands unjustly taken were restored to their owners, and peace was established among the contending lords around London. The young king chose wise coun-

cillors and administrators, and in a few years he won to his service nearly all the north country, as well as Scotland and a large part of Wales.

Then Arthur entered Wales, and proclaimed a great feast, after which he was to be crowned King of Wales at Caerleon.* Before he reached that city, he heard that six kings from the north country had assembled there with twenty-eight hundred knights. He was filled with joy, and sent messengers loaded with costly gifts to greet them.

But the kings rejected the gifts and spurned the messengers, saying: "We desire no gifts from a beardless boy of base origin. Instead of receiving gifts of gold and silver, we intend to bestow gifts with swords of well-tempered steel. Tell your low-born king his head is forfeit to us!"

When this message was brought to King Arthur, he prepared for a siege, gathering his knights about him, and collecting provisions. Meanwhile Merlin visited the hostile kings in the city of Caerleon, and tried to win them over.

"Why," said they, "have you made that boy Arthur your king?"

"Because," answered the wizard, "he is the son of Uther Pendragon and his wife Igraine. He is

* Pronounced kār-lē'-on.

now king, and he shall overcome all his enemies. Ere long he shall have subject to him Wales, Ireland, Scotland, and more realms than I can now recall."

Some of the kings jeered at Merlin, but others marvelled at his words. All, however, agreed that Arthur should come and speak with them, and assurance of safe conduct was given.

Arthur consented to parley with the kings, and rode forth, accompanied only by the archbishop of Canterbury and three knights.

At the meeting, stormy words were spoken on both sides. King Arthur finally declared that he would make the rebellious kings bow to his rule, and departed.

"What will you do?" said Merlin to the six kings. "It would be wise to submit, for though your numbers were ten times as great as they are yet shall you not prevail."

But they only laughed at the wizard. With that he departed, and came to King Arthur. Soon three hundred of the bravest knights deserted the kings and joined Arthur. Merlin urged him to prepare for a fierce battle, and enjoined him not to use the sword he had gained so miraculously unless he were sorely pressed. "Then draw it," said Merlin, "and do your best."

So King Arthur rode forth at the head of his

knights. Wonderful were the feats of arms done that day. Arthur astonished the opposing kings by his deeds of valor. At last three of them closed in on the youthful hero, slew his horse, and struck him down. When they were about to kill him, he drew forth his marvellous sword, which was called Excalibur. As he wielded it, the blade flashed so in the eyes of his enemies that they were dazzled, and to escape its beams they spurred on their steeds. This was the signal for retreat, and the people of Caerleon, armed with clubs and staves, joined in the pursuit, and slew many knights. Then Arthur entered Caerleon in triumph.

There the victorious knights feasted and held a grand tournament, in which they vied with one another in deeds of arms. King Arthur soon proceeded to London, and called his lords together in council. Merlin, too, was present, and he announced that the six kings had only withdrawn to recruit their forces, and that they had rallied to their assistance five other kings. The united forces of the rebellious kings and their allies numbered fifty thousand horse and ten thousand footmen.

“Send, therefore,” said Merlin, “to the kings of Benwick and Gaul, Ban and Bors, and entreat alliance with them. I will be your messenger, if you will send two trusty knights with me.”

All was done as Merlin had desired, and the three departed. News came every day of the power of the enemy, and an ordinance was made that no man of war should be allowed to travel through Arthur's country without a passport from the King.

It was not long before the two who had accompanied Merlin returned with Kings Ban and Bors and three hundred brave knights. Merlin remained behind, to lead through secluded ways the forces of the kings of Benwick and Gaul, to the number of ten thousand horse.

Arthur's army now numbered twenty thousand, ten thousand of his own men in the castle of Bedegraine, and ten thousand allies in the neighboring forest.

By Merlin's advice, scouts were sent to scour the country. They met scouts of the enemy, and from them learned which way their force was advancing. When this was told to Arthur, he, by the advice of Ban and Bors, devastated the whole country through which the hostile kings were to pass.

Soon the enemy arrived, and began to besiege the castle of Bedegraine. Again the advice of Merlin was sought. "Let Kings Ban and Bors be hid in ambush," said he, "and do you, Arthur, with your ten thousand men, give battle to the foe. When

you have fought long, then let those in ambush rush out, fresh and eager for the fray, and they will do deadly work."

The three kings and the lords said that Merlin advised well, and so it was done.

When the two armies stood face to face, the enemy were glad to see how greatly they outnumbered Arthur's men, and they waited for the attack.



On came Arthur, at the head of his knights, and they fought like lions. The knights of the enemy were also brave men, and they thrust and hewed as had never been seen before. Arthur rode here and there, on the right hand and on the

left, and rested not till he had slain twenty knights. His example was imitated by the brave Sir Kay and Sir Ector, as well as by many others of his followers.

Then King Lot, one of the rebellious kings, said to the others: "Unless ye do as I advise, we shall all be slain. Let five of us and fifteen thousand men stand apart while the rest continue the battle."

Then, when ye have fought long, we will rush on in your places."

They agreed to this, but when Lot and the other kings who were with him stood apart, they were attacked by troops of King Arthur that were in ambush. Then King Lot, espying King Bors, cried out: "O defend us! for I see yonder one of the best knights in the world."

"Who is he?" asked one of the kings.

"King Bors of Gaul," replied Lot. "How came he here without our knowledge? It must have been by Merlin's advice."

Lot then attacked King Bors's force with great energy, but when he looked up from the havoc he was making around him, he saw King Ban advancing.

"We are indeed lost!" he exclaimed. "We are now attacked by the most valiant knight in the world."

King Ban came into the battle so fiercely that his strokes resounded from wood and water, and King Lot wept for pity when he saw so many of his good knights come to an untimely end. He made his way to the other ten kings and said: "Lords, unless we send off our footmen, and get our horsemen close together to cover up their flight, we are undone."

They then withdrew over the river.

At this Merlin came to Arthur and said: "Withdraw your men now to your camp and rest. Reward your good knights with gold and with silver, for, though they are few in number, there were never men who did better work than they have done this day. You have matched with the best fighters of the world."

"That is true," said Kings Ban and Bors.

"Withdraw where you list," continued Merlin. "For three years they shall not dare to attack you. These kings have more on hand than they are aware of, for the Saracens have landed in their countries, and are destroying their villages. Let all the goods taken in this battle be given freely to these two kings, Ban and Bors, that they may properly reward their followers."

"It is well advised," said Arthur; "and so shall it be."

Then King Arthur and Kings Ban and Bors departed, and on the way they rescued King Leodegrance from his enemy King Rience. And there Arthur saw for the first time Guinever,* the daughter of King Leodegrance. Then he wished to accompany Kings Ban and Bors to their own coun-

* Pronounced gwin'e-vēr.

try, to requite the service they had rendered him. But they would not allow him, saying that there was still much for him to do in his own land.

So they departed, and it happened as Merlin had foretold. The eleven kings did not trouble Arthur again, and he was free to put down all rebellious outbreaks in other parts of his kingdom.

THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE.

ONE day, King Arthur said to Merlin: "My lords continually urge me to take a wife, and I desire thy counsel."

"Well," answered Merlin; "a man of your rank and age should not be without a wife. Is there any one that you love more than another?"

"Yes," said King Arthur, "I love Guinever, the daughter of King Leodegrance, who has in his house the Round Table given to him by my father, as you told me."

Then Merlin requested an escort of twenty-five knights, that he might go and ask the hand of Guinever. These were given, and Merlin went forth to Leodegrance, and told him of Arthur's love for his daughter.

"This is to me the best tidings I have heard," said Leodegrance. "I would give a part of my lands

with my daughter, did I not know that he has lands enough, but I shall send him a gift that will please him much more. He shall have the Round Table given me by Uther Pendragon, at which a hundred and fifty knights may find seats. I lack fifty knights, but he shall have the hundred that I now have."

When King Arthur heard of the coming of Guinever and the hundred knights with the Round Table, he rejoiced, and said: "This fair lady is indeed welcome, for I have loved her long. And these knights with the Round Table please me more than great riches."

Then, having ordered preparations for the marriage and coronation with all possible grandeur, he said to Merlin:—

"Go and find for me, in all this land, fifty knights of the greatest valor and goodness."

But Merlin could not find more than twenty-eight. These were brought in and the archbishop of Canterbury came and blessed the seats at the Table. After the knights had done homage to King Arthur, each found his name written in letters of gold on the table in front of his seat.

The wedding of the King and the fair Guinever was celebrated with much solemnity, and the ceremony concluded with the coronation of the Queen.

Then two knights were added to the hundred and twenty-eight already seated at the Round Table, and the names of these were Sir Gawaine and Sir Tor. The other twenty places were left vacant for the most worthy and valiant knights to be found who should enter upon the quest of the Holy Grail.*

When King Arthur beheld his hundred and thirty knights at the Round Table, he noticed that there were no seats in three of the twenty vacant places.

“Why is this?” he inquired.

“In two of the places,” answered Merlin, “none but the worthiest knights may sit; the place between these two is called the Siege Perilous, and if any knight, however worthy, be so hardy as to sit in it, save him for whom it is designed, he shall die.”

Then was it ordained that every knight should each year on the feast of Pentecost be present in his place at the Round Table, and that many jousts and tournaments should then be held.

Many years passed, and Arthur ever had in mind to gather round him the best knights to be found in his whole kingdom. Wherever a knight worthy by reason of great prowess and noble character was found, Arthur made him a knight of the Round Table. Wherever a youth of exceeding

* The Holy Grail, or Sangreal, was, according to legend, the cup used at the Last Supper.

courage and high honor was discovered, Arthur had him proved and knighted, and seated among the knights who for chivalry, daring, and pious devotion had nowhere their equal in the entire world.

But of all the knights that were admitted to the Round Table, none was braver or of greater prowess than Sir Launcelot. Many and marvellous were his adventures, and he was held in high esteem.

And of all the knights of the Round Table none was purer and nobler than Sir Percival. Many were his acts of noble chivalry, and wonderful, indeed, was his pious devotion.

To these two knights were assigned the places next the Siege Perilous. Now were all the places filled at the Round Table, save only that one place, to sit in which was death to any but him for whom it was designed. One hundred and forty-nine knights they were, the like of whom had never before been gathered together.

One time, as the feast of Pentecost was at hand, and all the knights of the Round Table were come to Camelot, there arrived a fair lady on horseback. She alighted, and came before the King.

"God bless thee, damsel!" said King Arthur; "whom seekest thou?"

"Sir," said she, "I pray you, tell me where Sir Launcelot is."

"Yonder is he," said the King.

Then she went to Sir Launcelot and said, "I require you to come with me at once."

"To what purpose?" asked Launcelot.



"That you shall know when you come," replied she.

Sir Launcelot bade his squire saddle his horse and bring his arms; then in all haste he followed the lady. They rode on till they came to an abbey. Twelve nuns came forth to meet them, bringing a

youth named Galahad, who was so fair and manly that in all the world there could not be found his equal.

"Sir," said the nuns to Launcelot, "we bring you here this youth, whom we have nourished, and we pray you to make him a knight; for so noble and true is he that you alone of all the knights of the Round Table are worthy to bestow on him the order of knighthood."

Sir Launcelot, looking at the young squire, acknowledged that he had never seen so perfect a man.

"Comes this desire from himself?" asked he.

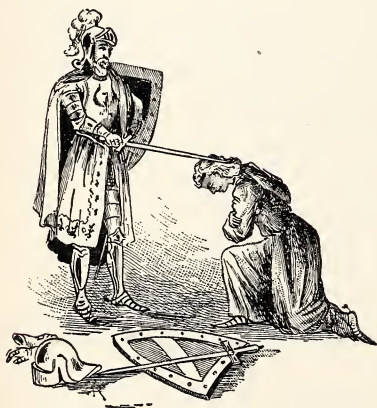
The ladies and the youth all answered, "Yea."

"Then," said Sir Launcelot, "if he prove himself, he shall receive the high order of knighthood to-morrow."

So next morning Galahad proved himself, and was knighted by Sir Launcelot.

"Now, fair sir," said Sir Launcelot, "will you come with me to the court of King Arthur?"

"Nay," said he, "not at this time will I go to the court."



Then Sir Launcelot departed for Camelot, leaving the newly made knight behind.

The feast of Pentecost was duly celebrated in the Cathedral. When the King and the knights returned from the service and were about to take their places at the Round Table, they found at the Siege Perilous this inscription: "Four hundred winters and fifty-four after the Passion of our Lord ought this seat to be filled."

"This is marvellous!" said all the knights.

"It seemeth to me," said Sir Launcelot, "that this Siege ought to be filled this day, for it is the feast of Pentecost in the four hundred and fifty-fourth year. If it please you, I would none of these letters were seen by others than ourselves till he come that is to occupy this place."

Then he covered the place with a silken cloth, and every knight took his own seat, and all were served by young men who were knights. When the knights of the Round Table were served, all the places being filled save only the Siege Perilous, anon there happened a marvellous thing. All the doors and windows shut of themselves. Then there came in an old man, clothed all in white, and no one knew whence he came. With him he brought a young knight without sword or shield. And the two came to the Siege Perilous, beside Sir

Launcelot and Sir Percival, and lifting up the cloth found there in letters of gold that shone brilliantly: "This is the siege of Galahad, the noble prince."

So the good man departed, and all the knights of the Round Table marvelled greatly that Sir Galahad, being so young, dared to sit in that Siege Perilous. When they saw that he was the one for whom the place had been designed, their wonder increased the more.

The feast being over, the King went to the Siege Perilous, and said unto Galahad: "Sir, you are welcome, for you shall move many knights to the quest of the Holy Grail, and achieve that which no knight has yet succeeded in doing." Then taking him by the hand, the King said: "My heart is broken, for now I see but once the full number of my brave knights seated at my Table Round. It is accomplished as has been foretold. I am sure that all the knights of the Round Table will soon depart in quest of the Holy Grail, and never again shall I see you all together. Let us now repair to the meadow of Camelot, to joust and to tourney, that after your death men may speak of your feats of valor and prowess."

All agreed to this, and arrayed themselves for the tournament. Goodly were the deeds of the noble knights, and many were the encounters with Sir

Galahad, who so broke spears that all men wondered at him. He defeated all who jousted with him but two, Sir Launcelot and Sir Percival.

That evening at supper, every knight sat in his own place at the Round Table. Then was heard the cracking and rolling of thunder, and in the midst there entered the hall a sunbeam clearer by seven times than any seen by day. Every knight looked at his neighbor, and saw him fairer and more beautiful than ever before. None spoke to the other, and all looked as though they were dumb. Soon there entered into the hall the Holy Grail, covered with white samite,* so that none saw it, nor who bore it. The hall was filled with sweet odors, and every knight had such meat and drink as he loved best. And when the Holy Grail had been borne through the hall, it departed suddenly.

Then the King broke the solemn silence with thanks to God for his grace, after which Sir Gawaine rose and said: "Our feast this day has been blessed with the presence of the Holy Grail, but it was so covered that we saw it not. Therefore I here make a vow that I will to-morrow embark and devote a year and a day to knightly deeds in search of the Holy Grail." When the

* A species of silk interwoven with gold.

other knights heard Sir Gawaine, they made like vows.

“Alas!” said King Arthur, “ye have slain me with the vows that ye have made. I shall be bereft of the fairest knighthood ever seen together in any realm of the world! For I am sure we all shall never more meet in this world, for many of you shall die in the quest.”

On the morrow they departed, and every knight took the way that he liked best.

Many were the adventures of the knights, and few returned to the Round Table. Sir Galahad alone, as the purest and bravest of knights, achieved the sight of the Holy Grail, and he died in his joy.

DEATH OF ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
“The sequel of to-day unsolders all

The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me
word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Yet, I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur;
It sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd

Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
“What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
heard?”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
“I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.”

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
“Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
For thou, the latest left of all my knights,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.”

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great
brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere,
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:

"Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone;
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin, yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware



That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black stoled, black hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from
them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"

And to the barge they came. There those three
Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his
hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways.
I have lived my life, and that which I have
done

May He within Himself make pure! but thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by
prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy
voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day:
But now farewell. I am going a long way
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow.
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted
swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

—ABRIDGED FROM TENNYSON.

THE DEATH OF ROLAND.

ROLAND was the nephew of that noble King of France (Charles the Great) known in history as Charlemagne (*pron.* shar'le-mān). The King had taken him as a babe from his mother's arms, had brought him up, and watched him as he grew to

be the bravest knight and the staunchest captain of the Frankish host. Happy was the King with his nephew at his side, and happy was Roland to fight the battles of his uncle.

For seven years the Franks had tarried in northern Spain. City after city had yielded to their arms, but Saragossa still withstood them. In this fortress

the Moslem king Marsir dwelt, plunged in despair at the ruin which was only too sure to come.

“What shall we do?” said he to his nobles. “We are too few to give the great Charles battle. What shall we

do to save our lives and lands?”

Then spoke Blancandrin, a wily counsellor: “We must get rid of this proud conqueror. Since we cannot drive him away, let us see if we cannot win him with promises. Send an embassy to him, and say we will give him treasure in gold and cattle; say we will do him vassal service; say we will be baptized; promise anything that will cause him to leave this land. He will want hostages for the fulfilment of our promises. Send ten of our sons.



Mine shall be of the number. Better that a score of us should be childless than that we should lose fair Spain."

King Marsir thought well of this advice, and chose as messengers to Charles the King at Cordova, Blancandrin and nine lords who were willing to give their sons as hostages.

Cordova resounded with revelry. Not a pagan remained in the city; for all had either been slain or had turned Christian. Charles sat with his knights in a beautiful garden, beneath a pine tree twined with brier roses. As in his chair of gold he sat, huge of limb, hale of body, and noble of countenance, he looked a hero indeed.

Here the messengers from the Moslem king found him. They knew the king at once, and fell at his feet.

Then spoke Blancandrin: "God save the noble King Charles! My master prays for peace. The gifts he offers are lions, bears, hounds, camels, and falcons, hundreds in number, his treasure of jewels, and of gold and silver as much as may be put in fifty chariots drawn by four hundred mules. Only make peace, and return to your own fair court, and my master will bow in vassalage, will hold all his possessions subject to your will, and will adore the God of the Christians."

The King heard the message, and pondered well over it. Then said he :

“Your king is my enemy. How shall I be assured that he will keep his pledges?”

“Great king,” replied the messengers, “we offer our children as hostages. Treat them tenderly. Our king will visit your court to pay his homage and his tribute.”

Charles provided lodging and entertainment for the embassy, and on the morrow they returned home. He then called his knights to council. With one voice they advised him to beware of the Moslem king.

“Trust him not,” said Roland. “Remember how he slew the messengers sent on a peaceful errand. Only this fortress stands out against our arms. Lay siege to it; conquer the last stronghold of the pagans; so win Spain, and end this weary war.”

But Ganelon, stepfather to Roland, drew near and said :

“What more have we to gain by fighting? Has not the Moslem offered us his all? What need is there for fighting for that which is freely offered to us? Roland delights in battle for its own sake, and cares little how many are slain, can he but add to his renown.”

Then the barons declared that Ganelon had

spoken well, and the king agreeing, there wanted only the messenger to bear Charles's glove and staff to the Moslem king in token of covenant.

Many offered to go, among them Roland, and his companion Oliver.

Then the King said: "Noble Franks, choose me a worthy man to bear my message to Marsir."

Roland answered: "Send Ganelon, my step-father." The other nobles also cried out: "Send Ganelon, for none is so cunning of speech as he."

Now, Ganelon was a coward at heart, and was terrified at being chosen messenger, for he remembered the fate of those who had gone on peaceful errands to the Moslem. But the choice could not be gainsaid. The King drew off his glove, and held it forth. As Ganelon stooped to take it, it fell to the ground.



"This is surely an evil omen," said the lords. But Ganelon picked up the glove quickly, and said: "Fear not; you shall all hear from it."

Many of Ganelon's vassals would have gone with him, but he forbade them all, saying: "It is better

that one should die than many. Stay here, and if I be slain, like the messengers who have gone before, be loyal to my son Baldwin."

He then mounted his horse and rode on till he overtook the pagan messengers.

Wily as was Blancandrin, equally so was Ganelon. They had not gone far together before each thoroughly understood the other to be a rogue. However, they became as friends, and planned together. When they came to Saragossa, Blancandrin led Ganelon to the King, and said: "Most worthy King, the answer to the message which you sent by me to the great Charles will be given by this noble lord."

Then Ganelon said: "God save the mighty King Marsir! This is the message from the great Charles: If you and yours become Christian, you shall have the half of Spain in vassalage. Otherwise we will come suddenly, take your land by force, bring you to court, and put you to death."

The color came and went in the monarch's face as he listened to these words. Ganelon, seeing the danger he was in, continued:

"Great King, you have heard the message. If it be your will, let the bearer of it die."

Then cried Blancandrin: "Do the Frank no harm! He has promised to work in our interest."

“Good Sir Ganelon,” said the King, “I will give you five hundred pieces of gold as a token of my favor. But tell me, is not your king tired of war, and satisfied with his riches? He is now old, and has fought, conquered, and heaped up wealth that is beyond count.”

“Charles has long been tired of war,” answered Ganelon, “but Roland, his captain, is covetous of fame, and greedy of wealth. Were he and his chosen companions but slain, the world would be at peace. But they command the flower of the host of France, full twenty thousand in number.”

“Nevertheless,” said the King, “I have four hundred thousand good men; with these could I not fight Charles?”

“No,” Ganelon answered. “Send back the hostages with me. Then will Charles gather up his host and depart for his capital to await you. But he will leave the rear-guard of twenty thousand, under command of Roland, to follow after him. Fall on these with your warriors. Let not one escape. Then will the power of Charles be broken, for Roland is his right arm. Then it will be for you to make the terms of peace, for Charles will fight no more. The rear-guard will pass along the narrow valley of Ronceval. There lie in wait for them.”

Then Marsir gave Ganelon rich presents of gold and jewels, and promised ten mules' burden of gold and silver, when Charles should sue for peace.

Ganelon returned to Charles with the news that Marsir would embrace the Christian faith, and was preparing to set out for the Frankish capital to receive baptism; and that he would hold Spain under oath of fealty to Charles.

Charles, confiding in Ganelon, then began his march through the pass in the mountains, on his return home. He gave the command of the rear-guard to Roland and his companion Oliver, ordering them to hold the pass of Ronceval with twenty thousand men, while he went on with the rest of the army.

When Charles had passed into France, Marsir rushed down with twenty thousand of his warriors from the hills where, by Ganelon's advice, he had lain in ambush, and attacked the rear-guard of the Franks. The Frankish troops defended themselves, and fighting like tigers, forced the Moslems to flee. But a fresh body of fifty thousand Moslems then appeared, and falling upon the Christians, who were faint and exhausted with long fighting, cut them down so that few escaped. Among these were Roland and two other captains.

Roland, after the battle, ascended a lofty hill, to

view the Moslem army, and seeing some Christians retreating by the Ronceval road, he blew his horn. He was quickly joined by about a hundred of his countrymen, and soon they were again in the midst of the enemy, slashing and hewing with all their might. Overcoming all opposition, Roland reached



the Moslem King and slew him. But by this time most of the other Christians were slain, and Roland himself was seriously wounded.

He now blew a loud blast on his horn, to summon to his assistance any Frank who might be concealed in the adjacent woods, or to recall his friends beyond the pass. This horn was endued with such

power, that all other horns were split by its sound. With such vehemence did Roland blow it that he burst the veins of his neck. The sound reached the King's ears. Charles recognized it, and would have rushed to his aid, but Ganelon dissuaded him, saying: "Roland is, perhaps, pursuing some wild beast, and the sound echoes through the woods."

Charles, however, was not satisfied with Ganelon's explanation, and summoning his army he marched back to Ronceval. The King himself first discovered the hero, Roland, lying where he had fallen.

"Oh, why did I leave thee here to perish?" cried Charles. "How can I survive thy death?"

Thus did Charles mourn for Roland. He caused the body to be embalmed with balsam, myrrh, and aloes. The whole army watched it that night, and the groves and valleys resounded with wailing.

Charles pursued the Moslems, and overtook them on the banks of the Ebro, feasting and rejoicing over their success. Attacking them valiantly, he slew many thousands, and dispersed the rest.

Then the King made strict inquiry into the conduct of Ganelon. His guilt was clearly proved, and he was executed as a traitor.

THE BALLAD OF CHEVY CHASE.

[CHEVY CHASE is one of the most famous English ballads. It was sung by minstrels all over England long before America was discovered. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, Sir Philip Sidney said of this ballad : "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet." His praise caused the song to take a form in which it still exists, with the quaint old spelling of that time. The modern ballad, slightly abridged, is given here.

In the Memoirs of Carey, Earl of Monmouth, we are told that it was the custom, in times of peace, for those living on either side of the Cheviot Hills, which lie along the border line between England and Scotland, to send to the Lord Warden of the other side for permission to hunt within his territory. Should this permission not be asked, the Lord Warden of the invaded border would not fail to interrupt the sport and punish the hunters. In the ballad, Douglas was probably the Scotch Lord Warden who resented the rudeness of Earl Percy in engaging in a hunt in the Cheviots without his permission.

Though something like the events narrated in the ballad may have occurred, the account of the battle is really a description of the battle of Otterburn, which was fought in 1388. In that battle the Scotch won a great victory, although Earl Douglas lost his life. Percy was not killed, but his two sons were taken prisoners.]

God prosper long our noble King,
Our lives and safeties all ;
A woeful hunting once there did
In Chevy Chase befall.

The stout Earl of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summer days to take ;

The chiefest harts in Chevy Chase
To kill and bear away.—

The tidings to Earl Douglas came
In Scotland, where he lay ;

Who sent Earl Percy present word
He would prevent his sport.

The English Earl, not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort,

With fifteen hundred bowmen bold,
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well, in time of need,
To aim their shafts aright.

The gallant greyhounds swiftly ran,
To chase the fallow deer :

On Monday they began to hunt
Ere daylight did appear ;

And long before high noon they had
A hundred fat bucks slain ;

Then, having dined, the drovers went
To rouse the deer again.

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods
The nimble deer to take ;

And with their cries the hills and dales
An echo shrill did make,

Lord Percy to the quarry* went
To view the slaughtered deer;
Quoth he, "Earl Douglas promised
This day to meet me here.

"If that I thought he would not come,
No longer would I stay."
With that a brave young gentleman
Thus to the earl did say:

"Lo! yonder doth Earl Douglas come,
His men in armor bright;
Full twenty hundred Scottish spears
All marching in our sight;

"All men of pleasant Teviotdale,
Fast by the river Tweed."

"Then cease your sport," Early Percy said,
"And take your bows with speed.

"And now with me, my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance;
For there was never champion yet,
In Scotland or in France,

"That ever did on horseback come,
But, if my hap it were,
I durst encounter, man for man,
With him to break a spear."

* Heap of game killed.



Earl Douglas on a milk-white steed,
Most like a baron bold,
Rode foremost of the company,
Whose armor shone like gold.

“Show me,” said he, “whose men ye be,
That hunt so boldly here;
That, without my consent, do chase
And kill my fallow deer!”

The man that first did answer make
Was noble Percy, he,—
Who said, “We list * not to declare,
Nor show whose men we be.

“Yet will we spend our dearest blood
Thy chiefest harts to slay.”

Then Douglas swore a solemn oath,
And thus in rage did say:

“Ere thus I will out-bravéd be,
One of us two shall die!
I know thee well! An earl thou art;
Lord Percy, so am I!

“But trust me, Percy, pity it were,
And great offence to kill
Any of these our guiltless men,
For they have done no ill.

* Choose.

“Let thou and I the battle try,
And set our men aside.”

“Accursed be he,” Earl Percy said,
“By whom this is denied !”

Then stepped a gallant esquire forth,
Witherington was his name,
Who said, “I would not have it told
To Henry our King for shame,

“That e’er my captain fought on foot,
And I stood looking on :
You be two earls,” said Witherington,
“And I a ’squire alone :

“I’ll do the best that do I may,
While I have power to stand ;
While I have power to wield my sword,
I’ll fight with heart and hand.”

Our English archers bent their bows,
Their hearts were good and true ;
At the first flight of arrows sent,
Full fourscore Scots they slew.

Yet bides Earl Douglas on the bent,*
As chieftain stout and good ;
As valiant captain, all unmoved,
The shock he firmly stood.

* Field.

His host he parted had in three,
As leader ware and tried,
And soon his spearmen on their foes
Bore down on every side.

Throughout the English archery
They dealt full many a wound,
But still our valiant Englishmen
All firmly kept their ground :

And throwing straight their bows away,
They grasped their swords so bright :
And now sharp blows, a heavy shower,
On shields and helmets light.

At last these two stout earls did meet,
Like captains of great might ;
Like lions wild, they laid on load,*
And made a cruel fight.

“Yield thee, Lord Percy !” Douglas said ;
“In faith I will thee bring
Where thou shalt high advanced be
By James, our Scottish King.

“Thy ransom I will freely give,
And thus report of thee :
Thou art the most courageous knight
That ever I did see.”

* Attacked fiercely.

“No, Douglas!” quoth Earl Percy then;
“Thy proffer I do scorn;
I will not yield to any Scot
That ever yet was born!”



With that there came an arrow keen
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Earl Douglas to the heart,
A deep and deadly blow:

Who never spoke more words than these:
“Fight on, my merry men all!
For why? my life is—at an end:
Lord Percy sees my fall.”

Then leaning down, Earl Percy took
The dead man by the hand,
And said, "Earl Douglas, for thy life
Would I had lost my land !

"Alas ! my very heart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake ;
For sure, a more redoubted knight
Mischance could never take."

A knight amongst the Scots there was,
Who saw Earl Douglas die,
And straight in wrath did vow revenge
Upon the Lord Percy :

Sir Hugh Montgomery he was called ;
Who with a spear most bright,
Well mounted on a gallant steed,
Ran fiercely through the fight,

And, past the English archers all,
Without all dread or fear ;
And through Earl Percy's body then
He thrust his hateful spear :

So thus did both these nobles die,
Whose courage none could stain.
An English archer then perceived
The noble earl was slain ;

He had a bow bent in his hand,
Made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard * long
Up to the head drew he :

Against Sir Hugh Montgomery
So right the shaft he set,
The gray-goose wing that was thereon
In his heart's blood was wet.

The fight did last from break of day
Till setting of the sun ;
For when they rung the evening-bell
The battle scarce was done.

Of twenty hundred Scottish spears
Scarce fifty-five did flee :
Of fifteen hundred Englishmen
Went home but fifty-three.

God save our King, and bless this land
In plenty, joy, and peace !
And grant, henceforth, that foul debate
'Twixt noblemen shall cease.

* Twenty-seven inches.

DICK WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT.

ABOUT five hundred years ago, in a little village not far from London, there was a poor orphan boy named Dick Whittington. How he lived few knew, and nobody cared; but though no one cared for him, he was honest and truthful and did nothing of which he need be ashamed.

In return for what little work he was able to do, he would receive a meal and a lodging, or even a cast-off garment, and so he managed to exist.

Ragged and neglected as he was, however, he was brighter than many a boy well clothed and fed. He learned of the great city which was near, and the stories he heard were made brighter by his imagination. The great wealth of the city, the fine houses, the beautiful streets, and the richly dressed people lost none of their splendor in the mind of the little country lad.

Little Dick dreamed of all these fine things till at last he came to think that the streets of London were paved with gold, and that he had only to reach the city to make his fortune.

The men with whom he sometimes talked amused themselves with the lad, and told him

stories which fired his imagination all the more. Nothing would now do for Dick but to go to London. Could he only reach the city, all his troubles would be over, and he would be as fine a gentleman as any in the land.

But how was he to get there? He was but a little fellow, and he did not know the way. One day he met a man who was going to London in a wagon, and when Dick begged to go along, he was overjoyed to be allowed to walk by the side of the wagon all the way.



“How kind the wagoner is to me!” thought Dick. “Now I shall soon

be as good as anyone. Some time I shall come back here, and how the people will stare when they see me in my fine clothes!”

The way did not seem long to Dick, for his mind continually dwelt on the great things he would do. At last London came into view, and the wagoner whipped up his horses and was away before Dick could persuade himself that the golden city was at hand. He looked about him, but no sign of gold was anywhere to be seen. The

streets were even dirtier than those of his native village, and the people were stranger and more uncivil than any he had met before.

He wandered about in his disappointment, vainly looking for something to prove to him that he had not been mistaken in what he had imagined the great city to be. But, alas! how he had deceived himself.

Wearied with his long walk, and weak from hunger, Dick accosted several people and begged them to give him something in charity. Some only stared at him, while others roughly bade him let them alone. One man, annoyed at the request of the lad, gave him a blow which cut his head and caused the blood to trickle down his face.

At last, fainting with hunger and loss of blood, poor Dick lay down at the doorstep of a rich merchant; but he was rudely awakened by a servant, who threatened to scald him if he did not move on. He managed to get on his feet just as the merchant, Mr. Fitzwarren, came up. He began to ask some questions, but before the boy could answer he fell fainting at the feet of the merchant.

Mr. Fitzwarren immediately ordered the servants to take the boy into the house and put him to

bed. Here he was fed and cared for, and when he had fully recovered he was delighted to learn that he was to be employed by his benefactor. To be sure, the work was not very pleasant, for he had to help the cook, who disliked him from the moment she saw him at the doorstep. No work was too mean for him, and when she could find nothing for him to do, she beat him with anything she could lay hold of. At last, news of poor Dick's ill treatment reached Miss Alice, the master's young daughter, and she gave strict orders that he should no longer be abused.

But Dick's misery was not confined to the kitchen. When at night he was able to escape the cook's abuse and go to bed, he had to encounter a new terror. The garret in which he slept was so infested with rats and mice that he was kept awake the greater part of the night. They would run over him in bed, and they seemed to grow bolder as time wore on. He used to long for the morning, even though it was but the dawn of another day of abuse in the kitchen.

One day a gentleman who visited Mr. Fitzwarren's house gave Dick a penny. This the lad put in his pocket and kept securely, for it was the first piece of money he had ever had. Visions of the wealth that would come to him through profitable

investment danced before his eyes. He must begin prudently, he thought, for everything depends on the success of the first investment. Just then he spied a woman in the street with a cat under her arm. The thoughts of his misery at night put to flight all his dreams of wealth, for there was the animal that would drive away the rats and mice. Without further thought, he ran up to the woman and asked her if she would sell her cat for a penny. She laughed at Dick for thinking that her cat could be bought for such a sum; but he begged piteously, telling her that he was in sore need of a cat, and had only a penny in the world. She then let him have the animal.

Dick thanked the woman for her kindness, and ran off with his prize to the garret. The cat soon killed or frightened away the rats and the mice, so that the poor boy could now sleep in peace.

One day, Mr. Fitzwarren called his servants together, and announced to them that he was about to send a ship on a trading voyage, and, according to his custom, every one of the servants might venture something. Each article was to be traded for the sole benefit of the sender, without any charge being made for freight or commission.

All the servants were present except poor Whittington. Miss Alice, noticing his absence and

knowing that his poverty kept him away, ordered him to be called.

Dick came, and when asked to venture something in the expedition knew not what to say, for he had neither money nor goods. Miss Alice offered to contribute something in his name, but the merchant would not permit this. Dick felt his poverty as never before, and he could not think of a single thing that he had worth venturing. But suddenly he remembered his cat. The rats and mice had all disappeared, and Puss was getting fat from laziness. "But surely," he thought, "she has earned the right to be idle."

"Come, come, Dick!" said Mr. Fitzwarren suddenly; "what are you dreaming about?"

Before Dick could think, he quickly answered: "Only about my cat."

"Your cat?" exclaimed several.

"Yes, my cat, that I bought for a penny, and that has driven away all the rats and mice that used to annoy me so," replied Dick.

"Fetch the cat, boy," said the merchant, "and send her."

Whittington brought poor Puss and delivered her over to the captain of the merchant's vessel.

"There," said he with tears in his eyes, "now the rats and mice will annoy me as much as ever."

Everybody laughed at the poor fellow except Miss Alice, and she in pity gave him some money and told him to buy another cat.



While Puss was at sea, poor Dick was enduring great torment at the hands of the cook. She was too much afraid of her master and Miss Alice to beat the boy, but she did not hesitate to scold him and to abuse him with her tongue.

At last Dick determined to run away. Having packed up the few things he had, he set out very early one morning. He had travelled quite a distance, and was sitting down on a stone to rest and to consider what course he should take,

when Bow * Bells began to ring. They seemed to speak to him and to say :

“Turn again, Whittington,
Thrice Lord Mayor of London.”

“Lord Mayor of London !” said he to himself. “That is worth going back for. What wouldn’t one endure to be Lord Mayor of London, and ride in the great state coach? Why, this would be even better than my old dreams. Think of going back to the village as Lord Mayor! Well, I’ll go back to Mr. Fitzwarren’s, and the cook may pummel and abuse me as much as she pleases.”

So back he went, and reached his garret before anyone noticed that he had been away.

But how fared the expedition in which Mr. Fitzwarren and his servants had ventured so much?

The ship which had the cat on board encountered rough weather, and at last, by contrary winds, was driven out of her course on a part of the coast of Barbary which was inhabited by Moors. These people received the seamen kindly, and the captain, in order to trade with them, showed the samples

* The celebrated chimes of the Church of St. Mary-le-Bow, London.

of the goods he had on board, and sent some to the king of the country. His Majesty was so well pleased that he sent for the officers of the vessel and invited them to his palace. Here they were received, according to the custom of the country, on rich carpets, embroidered with gold and silver. The king and queen having taken seats at the upper end of the room, dinner was brought in; but no sooner were the dishes placed before them than an amazing number of rats and mice came from all quarters, and devoured the food.

The captain, in surprise, turned to the nobles, and asked why these vermin were permitted to infest the palace. They said: "The king would give half his treasure to be freed from them, for they not only destroy his dinner, but attack him even in bed, so that he has to be watched while he is sleeping, and we have found no means of destroying them."

The captain jumped for joy; he remembered poor Whittington and his cat, and told the king he had a creature on board the ship that would despatch all these vermin immediately. The king was so joyed at this news that his turban dropped off his head. "Bring this creature to me," said he; "and if it will perform what you say, I will load your ship with gold and jewels in exchange."

The captain, who was a shrewd trader, at once began to set forth the merits of Dick's cat. He told his majesty that it would be inconvenient to part with her, as, when she was gone, the rats and mice might destroy the goods in the ship; but to oblige his majesty he would fetch her. "Run, run," said the queen; "I am impatient to see the dear creature."

Away went the captain to his ship, and the king's cooks meanwhile prepared another dinner. It had just been placed before the guests, and the rats and mice were about to devour it as before, when the captain returned with the cat in his arms. She sprang upon the largest rat and killed it before the king could realize what had happened, while the other rats at the very sight of her fled in terror to their holes.

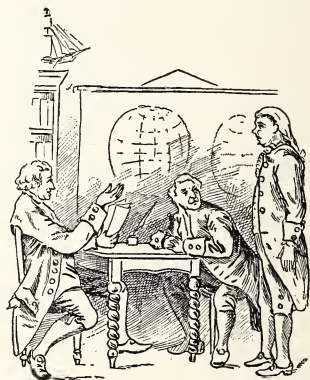
The king rejoiced greatly to see his old enemies driven away, and the queen was so pleased that she desired to have the cat near her. Hereupon the captain called the cat, and she came to him. He then presented her to the queen.

The cat was put down on the queen's lap, where, after playing with her majesty's hand, she purred herself to sleep.

The king now began to bargain with the captain for the ship's whole cargo, and then gave ten times

as much for the cat as for all the rest. After staying a few days at the court, the captain and the officers took leave of their majesties, and sailed with a fair wind for England. The return voyage was favorable, and they soon reached home.

One morning, Mr. Fitzwarren had just entered the counting-house and seated himself at his desk, when he heard a tap, tap, at the door. "Who's there?" said Mr. Fitzwarren. "A friend," answered the other. "I come to bring you good news of your ship." The merchant hastened to open the door. Who should be there waiting but the captain, with a cabinet of jewels and a bill of lading for the goods he had received in trade. Then the captain related the adventures of his voyage, and showed the cabinet of jewels which he had received for Dick's cat. Upon this Mr. Fitzwarren rang for his footman and told him to call Dick, crying out with great earnestness, as the story-writers of that time tell us:



“Go send him in, and tell him of his fame,
And call him Mr. Whittington by name.”

Some one who was present told the merchant that this treasure was too much for such a lad as Dick; but he said, with great earnestness: "God forbid that I should deprive the poor boy of a penny; it is his own, and he shall have it to a farthing." Dick came in, thinking it was intended to make sport of him, as had been too often the case in the kitchen; so he besought his master not to mock a poor simple fellow who intended no harm, but let him go about his business. The merchant, taking him by the hand, said: "Indeed, Mr. Whittington, I am in earnest with you, and I want to congratulate you on your great success. Your cat has procured you more money than all I am worth in the world, and may you long enjoy it and be happy!"

Being shown the treasure, and convinced at length that all of it belonged to him, he fell upon his knees and thanked the Almighty for his providential care. He then laid all the treasure at his master's feet. Mr. Fitzwarren refused to take any part of it, but said that he rejoiced heartily at Dick's prosperity, and hoped the wealth he had acquired would be a comfort to him, and would make him happy. Dick then applied to his mistress, and to his good friend Miss Alice, who refused to take any part of the money. He gave

a valuable present to the captain and all the ship's crew for the care they had taken of his cat. He likewise distributed presents to all the servants in the house, not forgetting even his old enemy the cook, though she little deserved anything good at his hands.

After this, Mr. Fitzwarren advised Mr. Whittington to send for a proper outfit and dress himself like a gentleman, and invited him to remain as a guest till he could provide himself with a suitable home.

Now, when Mr. Whittington's face was washed, his hair curled, and he was dressed in a rich suit of clothes, he was a fine-looking young fellow ; and, as wealth contributes much to give a man confidence, he soon acquired the manner of a gentleman of that time. He grew to be a sprightly and good companion, and Miss Alice, who had formerly pitied him, now fell in love with him.



When her father perceived this, he proposed a match between them, to which both parties cheerfully consented, and the

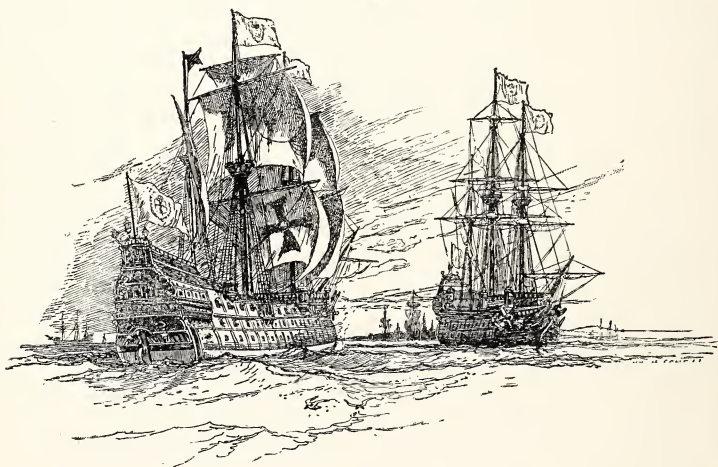
Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, the Sheriffs, the Company of Stationers, the Royal Academy of Arts, and a number of eminent merchants attended the marriage ceremony, and were entertained at a magnificent wedding feast. Dick and his wife lived very happily together to a good old age. Mr. Whittington served as Sheriff of London, and was three times Lord Mayor. In the last year of his mayoralty he entertained King Henry V. and his queen, after his return from France. Upon this occasion the king, in consideration of Whittington's merit, said: "Never had prince such a subject." To this Whittington replied: "Never had subject such a king." His majesty, out of respect for the good character of Mr. Whittington, conferred the honor of knighthood on him.

His early poverty made Sir Richard ever active in charity and in public works. No person in distress ever applied to him in vain for assistance. For many years before his death he daily fed a great number of poor citizens. His public spirit was remarkable. He built a church and a college, with a yearly allowance for poor scholars, and erected a hospital near by. He also gave liberally to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and to other public charities. The city of London, and even King Henry himself, received assistance from him in times of financial trouble.

THE HEART OF THE BRUCE.

It was upon an April morn,
While yet the frost lay hoar,
We heard Lord James's bugle horn
Sound by the rocky shore.

Then down we went, a hundred knights,
All in our dark array,
And flung our armor in the ships
That rode within the bay.



We spoke not as the shore grew less,
But gazed in silence back,
Where the long billows swept away
The foam behind our track.

And aye the purple hues decay'd
Upon the fading hill,
And but one heart in all that ship
Was tranquil, cold, and still.

The good Lord Douglas walk'd the deck,
And oh, his brow was wan!
Unlike the flush it used to wear
When in the battle van.—

“Come hither, come hither, my trusty knight,
Sir Simon of the Lee;
There is a freit* lies near my soul
I fain would tell to thee.

“Thou knowest the words King Robert spoke
Upon his dying day,
How he bade me take his noble heart
And carry it far away;

“And lay it in the holy soil
Where once the Saviour trod,
Since he might not bear the blessed Cross,
Nor strike one blow for God.

“Now, by thy knightly faith, I pray,
Sir Simon of the Lee—
For truer friend had never man
Than thou hast been to me—

* Pronounced *fret*, a foreboding of good or evil.

“If ne’er upon the Holy Land
’Tis mine in life to tread,
Bear thou to Scotland’s kindly earth
The relics of her dead.”

The tear was in Sir Simon’s eye
As he wrung the warrior’s hand:—
“Betide me weal, betide me woe,
I’ll hold by thy command.

“But if in battle front, Lord James,
’Tis ours once more to ride,
Nor force of man, nor craft of fiend,
Shall cleave me from thy side!”

And aye we sail’d, and aye we sail’d,
Across the weary sea,
Until one morn the coast of Spain
Rose grimly on our lee.

And as we rounded to the port,
Beneath the watch-tower’s wall,
We heard the clash of the atabals,*
And the trumpet’s wavering call.

“Why sounds yon Eastern music here
So wantonly and long,
And whose the crowd of armed men
That round yon standard throng?”

* Small Moorish drums.

“The Moors have come from Africa
To spoil, and waste, and slay,
And King Alonzo of Castile
Must fight with them to-day.”

“Now shame it were,” cried good Lord James,
“Shall never be said of me
That I and mine have turn’d aside,
From the Cross in jeopardy!

“Have down, have down, my merry men all—
Have down unto the plain;
We’ll let the Scottish lion loose
Within the fields of Spain!”

“Now welcome to me, noble lord,
Thou and thy stalwart power;
Dear is the sight of a Christian knight,
Who comes in such an hour!

“Is it for bond or faith ye come,
Or yet for golden fee?
Or bring ye France’s lilies here,
Or the flower of Burgundie?”

“God greet thee well, thou valiant King,
Thee and thy belted peers—
Sir James of Douglas am I called,
And these are Scottish spears.

“We do not fight for bond or plight,
Nor yet for golden fee;
But for the sake of our blessed Lord,
Who died upon the tree.

“We bring our great King Robert’s heart
Across the weltering wave,
To lay it in the holy soil
Hard by the Saviour’s grave.

“True pilgrims we, by land or sea,
Where danger bars the way;
And therefore are we here, Lord King,
To ride with thee this day!”

The King has bent his stately head,
And the tears were in his eyne* :—
“God’s blessing on thee, noble knight,
For this brave thought of thine!

“I know thy name full well, Lord James.
And honour’d may I be,
That those who fought beside the Bruce
Should fight this day for me!

“Take thou the leading of the van,
And charge the Moors amain;
There is not such a lance as thine
In all the host of Spain!”

* Eyes.

The Douglas turned towards us then,
O but his glance was high!—
“There is not one of all my men
But is as bold as I.



“There is not one of all my knights
But bears as true a spear—
Then onwards! Scottish gentlemen,
And think—King Robert’s here.”

The trumpets blew, the cross-bolts flew,
The arrows flashed like flame,
As, spur in side and spear in rest,
Against the foe we came.

And many a bearded Saracen
Went down, both horse and man;
For through their ranks we rode like corn,
So furiously we ran!

But in behind our path they closed,
Though fain to let us through,
For they were forty thousand men,
And we were wondrous few.

We might not see a lance's length,
So dense was their array,
But the long fell sweep of the Scottish blade
Still held them hard at bay.

"Make in! make in!" Lord Douglas cried,
"Make in, my brethren dear!
Sir William of Saint Clair is down,
We may not leave him here!"

But thicker, thicker, grew the swarm,
And sharper shot the rain,
And the horses reared amid the press,
But they would not charge again.

“Now Heaven help thee,” said Lord James,
“Thou kind and true Saint Clair!
An’ if I may not bring thee off,
I’ll die beside thee there!”

Then in his stirrups up he stood,
So lionlike and bold,
And held the precious heart aloft,
All in its case of gold.

He flung it from him, far ahead,
And never spake he more,
But, “Pass thee first, thou dauntless heart,
As thou wert wont of yore!”

The roar of fight rose fiercer yet,
And heavier still the stour,*
Till the spears of Spain came shivering in
And swept away the Moor.

“Now praised be God, the day is won!
They fly o’er flood and fell—
Why dost thou draw the rein so hard,
Good knight that fought so well?”

“Oh, ride ye on, Lord King!” he said,
“And leave the dead to me,
For I must keep the dreariest watch
That ever I shall dree!†

* Conflict,

† Endure.

“There lies, beside his master’s heart,
The Douglas, stark and grim,
And woe is me I should be here,
Not side by side with him!

“And Scotland, thou may’st veil thy head
In sorrow and in pain;
The sorest stroke upon thy brow
Hath fallen this day in Spain!”

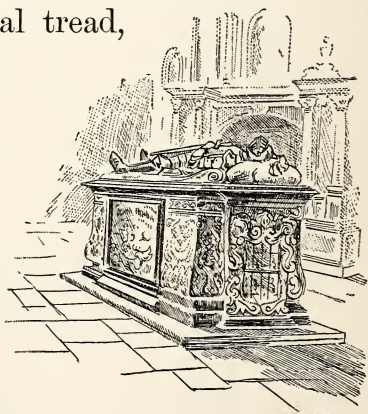
We bore the good Lord James away,
And the priceless heart he bore,
And heavily we steered our ship
Towards the Scottish shore.

No welcome greeted our return,
Nor clang of martial tread,
But all were dumb and
hushed as death
Before the mighty
dead.

We laid our chief in
Douglas Kirk,
The heart in fair
Melrose;

And woeful men were we that day—
God grant their souls repose!

—WILLIAM EDMONDSTOUNE AYTOUN,



THE STORY OF MACBETH.

I. THE WITCHES GREET HIM.

THERE was once a king of Scotland called Duncan, a very good old man. He had two sons; one was called Malcolm, and the other Donaldbane. But King Duncan was too old to lead out his army to battle, and his sons were too young to help him.

Now it happened, in King Duncan's time, that a great fleet of Danes came to Scotland and landed their men in Fife, and threatened to take possession of that province. So a numerous Scottish army was levied to go to fight against them. The King, as I have just said, was too old to command his army, and his sons were too young. He therefore sent out one of his near relations, called Macbeth, who was the son of the Thane of Glamis. The governors of provinces were at that time, in Scotland, called thanes; they were afterwards termed earls.

This Macbeth, who was a brave soldier, put himself at the head of the Scottish army, and marched against the Danes. And he carried with him a relation of his own, called Banquo, who was Thane of Lochaber, and was also a very brave man. So

there was a great battle fought between the Danes and the Scots; and Macbeth and Banquo, the Scottish generals, defeated the Danes, and drove them back to their ships, leaving a great many of their soldiers both killed and wounded. Then Macbeth and his army marched back to a town in the north of Scotland, called Forres, rejoicing on account of their victory.

Now there lived at this time three old women in the town of Forres, whom people looked upon as witches, and supposed they could tell what was to come to pass. Nobody would believe such folly nowadays, except low and ignorant creatures, such as those who consult gypsies in order to have their fortunes told; but in those early times the people were much more ignorant, and even great men, like Macbeth, believed that such persons as these witches of Forres could tell what was to come to pass afterwards, and listened to the nonsense they told them as if the old women had really been prophetesses. The old women saw that they were respected and feared, so that they were tempted to impose upon people, by pretending to tell what was to happen to them; and they got presents for doing so.

So the three old women went and stood by the wayside, in a great moor or heath near Forres, and waited till Macbeth came up. And then, stepping

before him as he was marching at the head of his soldiers, the first woman said, "All hail, Macbeth—hail to thee, Thane of Glamis." The second said, "All hail, Macbeth—hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor." Then the third, wishing to pay him a higher compliment than the other two, said, "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King of Scotland." Macbeth was very much surprised to hear them give him these titles; and while he was wondering what they could mean, Banquo stepped forward, and asked them whether they had nothing to tell about him as well as about Macbeth. And they said that he should not be so great as Macbeth, but that, though he himself should never be a king, yet his children should succeed to the throne of Scotland, and be kings for a great number of years.



Before Macbeth recovered from his surprise, there came a messenger to tell him that his father was dead, so that he was become Thane of Glamis by inheritance. And there came a second messenger, from the King, to thank Macbeth for the great victory over the Danes, and tell him that the Thane of

Cawdor had rebelled against the King, and that the King had taken his office from him, and had sent to make Macbeth Thane of Cawdor as well as of Glamis. Thus the two first old women seemed to be right in giving him those two titles. I dare say they knew something of the death of Macbeth's father, and that the government of Cawdor was intended for Macbeth, though he had not heard of it.

However, Macbeth, seeing a part of their words come to be true, began to think how he was to bring the rest to pass, and make himself king, as well as Thane of Glamis and Cawdor. Now Macbeth had a wife, who was a very ambitious, wicked woman, and when she found out that her husband thought of raising himself up to be King of Scotland, she encouraged him in his wicked purpose by all the means in her power, and persuaded him that the only way to get possession of the crown was to kill the good old King Duncan. Macbeth was very unwilling to commit so great a crime, for he knew what a good sovereign Duncan had been; and he recollected that he was his relation, and had been always very kind to him, and had intrusted him with the command of his army, and had bestowed on him the government or thanedom of Cawdor. But his wife continued telling him what a foolish, cowardly thing it was in him not to take the oppor-

tunity of making himself King, when it was in his power to gain what the witches promised him. So the wicked advice of his wife, and the prophecy of these wretched old women, at last brought Macbeth to think of murdering his King and his friend. The way in which he accomplished his crime made it still more abominable.

II. MACBETH BECOMES KING.

Macbeth invited Duncan to come to visit him, at a great castle near Inverness; and the good King, who had no suspicions of his kinsman, accepted the invitation very willingly. Macbeth and his lady received the King and all his retinue with much appearance of joy, and made a great feast, as a subject would do to make his King welcome. About the middle of the night, the King desired to go to his apartment, and Macbeth conducted him to a fine room which had been prepared for him. Now it was the custom, in those barbarous times, that wherever the King slept, two armed men slept in the same chamber, in order to defend his person in case he should be attacked by any one during the night. But the wicked Lady Macbeth had made these two watchmen drink a great deal of wine, and had besides put some drugs into the liquor; so that

when they went to the King's apartment they both fell asleep, and slept so soundly that nothing could awaken them.

Then the cruel Macbeth came into King Duncan's bedroom about two in the morning. It was a terrible, stormy night ; but the noise of the wind and of the thunder did not awaken the King, for he was old, and weary with his journey ; neither could it awaken the two sentinels, who were stupefied with the liquor and the drugs they had swallowed.



They all slept soundly. So Macbeth, having come into the room and stepped gently over the floor, took the two dirks which belonged to the sentinels, and stabbed poor old King Duncan to the heart. Then Macbeth put the bloody daggers into

the hands of the sentinels, that it might appear as if they had committed the murder. Macbeth was, however, greatly frightened at what he had done, but his wife made him wash his hands and go to bed.

Early in the morning, the nobles and gentlemen who attended on the king assembled in the great hall of the castle, and there they began to talk of what a dreadful storm it had been the night before. But Macbeth could scarcely understand what they said, for he was thinking on something much worse and more frightful than the storm, and was wondering what would be said when they heard of the murder. They waited for some time; but finding the King did not come from his apartment, one of the noblemen went to see whether he was well or not. But when he came into the room, he found poor King Duncan lying stiff and cold, and the two sentinels both fast asleep. As soon as the Scottish nobles saw this terrible sight, they were greatly astonished and enraged; and Macbeth made believe as if he were more enraged than any of them, and, drawing his sword, before any one could prevent him, he killed the two attendants of the King who slept in the bedchamber, pretending to think they had been guilty of murdering King Duncan.

When Malcolm and Donaldbane, the two sons of the good King, saw their father slain in this strange manner within Macbeth's castle, they became afraid that they might be put to death likewise, and fled away out of Scotland; for, notwithstanding all the excuses which he could make, they still believed that Macbeth had killed their father. Donaldbane fled into some distant islands, but Malcolm, the eldest son of Duncan, went to the court of England, where he begged for assistance from the English King, to place him on the throne of Scotland as his father's successor.

In the mean time, Macbeth took possession of the kingdom of Scotland, and thus all his wicked wishes seemed to be fulfilled. But he was not happy. He began to reflect how wicked he had been in killing his friend and benefactor, and how some other person, as ambitious as he was himself, might do the same thing to him. He remembered, too, that the old women had said that the children of Banquo should succeed to the throne after his death, and therefore he concluded that Banquo might be tempted to conspire against him, as he had himself done against King Duncan. The wicked always think other people are as bad as themselves. In order to prevent this supposed danger, Macbeth hired ruffians to watch in a wood, where Banquo

and his son Fleance sometimes used to walk in the evening, with instructions to attack them, and kill both father and son. The villains did as they were ordered by Macbeth ; but while they were killing Banquo, the boy Fleance made his escape from their wicked hands, and fled from Scotland into Wales. And it is said that, long afterwards, his children came to possess the Scottish crown.

Macbeth was not the more happy that he had slain his brave friend and cousin, Banquo. He knew that men began to suspect the wicked deeds which he had done, and he was constantly afraid that some one would put him to death as he had done his old sovereign, or that Malcolm would obtain assistance from the King of England, and come to make war against him, and take from him the Scottish kingdom. So, in this great perplexity of mind, he thought he would go to the old women whose words had first put into his mind the desire of becoming a king. It is to be supposed that he offered them presents, and that they were cunning enough to study how to give him some answer which should make him continue in the belief that they could prophesy what was to happen in future times. So they answered him that he should not be conquered, or lose the crown of Scotland, until a great forest, called Birnam Wood, should come

to attack a strong castle situated on a high hill called Dunsinane,* in which castle Macbeth commonly resided. Now, the hill of Dunsinane is upon the one side of a great valley, and the forest of Birnam is upon the other. There are twelve miles' distance betwixt them; and besides that, Macbeth thought it was impossible that the trees could ever come to the assault of the castle. He therefore resolved to fortify his castle on the hill of Dunsinane very strongly, as being a place in which he would always be sure to be safe. For this purpose he caused all his great nobility and thanes to send in stones, and wood and other things wanted in building, and to drag them with oxen up to the top of the steep hill where he was building the castle.

III. BIRNAM WOOD COMES TO DUNSINANE.

Now, among other nobles who were obliged to send oxen, and horses, and materials to this laborious work, was one called Macduff, the Thane of Fife. Macbeth was afraid of this thane, for he was very powerful, and was accounted both brave and wise; and Macbeth thought he would most probably join

* In Scotland pronounced Dunsinnan.

with Prince Malcolm, if ever he should come from England with an army. The King, therefore, had a private hatred against the Thane of Fife, which he kept concealed from all men, until he should have some opportunity of putting him to death, as he had done Duncan and Banquo. Macduff, on his part, kept upon his guard, and went to the King's court as seldom as he could, thinking himself never safe unless while in his own castle of Kennoway, which is on the coast of Fife, near to the mouth of the Frith of Forth.

It happened, however, that the King had summoned several of his nobles, and Macduff, the Thane of Fife, amongst others, to attend him at his new castle of Dunsinane; and they were all obliged to come—none dared stay behind. Now, the King was to give the nobles a great entertainment, and preparations were made for it. In the mean time, Macbeth rode out with a few attendants, to see the oxen drag the wood and the stones up the hill, for enlarging and strengthening the castle. So they saw most of the oxen trudging up the hill with great difficulty (for the ascent is very steep), and the burdens were heavy, and the weather was extremely hot. At length Macbeth saw a pair of oxen so tired that they could go no farther up the hill, but fell down under their load. Then the

King was very angry, and demanded to know who it was among his thanes that had sent oxen so weak and so unfit for labor, when he had so much work for them to do. Some one replied that the oxen belonged to Macduff, the Thane of Fife. "Then," said the King, in great anger, "since the Thane of Fife sends such worthless cattle as these to do my labor, I will put his own neck into the yoke, and make him drag the burdens himself."

There was a friend of Macduff who heard these angry expressions of the King, and hastened to communicate them to the Thane of Fife, who was walking in the hall of the King's castle while dinner was preparing. The instant that Macduff heard what the King had said, he knew he had no time to lose in making his escape; for whenever Macbeth threatened to do mischief to any one, he was sure to keep his word.

So Macduff snatched up from the table a loaf of bread, called for his horses and his servants, and was galloping back to his own province of Fife, before Macbeth and the rest of the nobility were returned to the castle. The first question which the King asked was, what had become of Macduff? and being informed that he had fled from Dunsinane, he ordered a body of his guards to attend him, and mounted on horseback himself to

pursue the thane, with the purpose of putting him to death.

Macduff, in the mean time, fled as fast as horses' feet could carry him; but he was so ill provided with money for his expenses, that, when he came to the great ferry over the river Tay, he had nothing to give to the boatmen who took him across, excepting the loaf of bread which he had taken from the King's table. The place was called, for a long time afterwards, the Ferry of the Loaf.

When Macduff got into his province of Fife, which is on the other side of the Tay, he rode on faster than before, towards his own castle of Kennoway, which, as I told you, stands close by the sea-side; and when he reached it, the King and his guards were not far behind him. Macduff ordered his wife to shut the gates of the castle, draw up the drawbridge, and on no account to permit the King or any of his soldiers to enter. Having given this order, he went to the small harbor belonging to the castle, and caused a ship which was lying there to be fitted out for sea in all haste, and got on board himself, in order to escape from Macbeth.

In the mean time, Macbeth summoned the lady to surrender the castle, and to deliver up her husband. But Lady Macduff, who was a wise and a

brave woman, made many excuses and delays, until she knew that her husband was safely on board the ship, and had sailed from the harbor. Then she spoke boldly from the wall of the castle to the King, who was standing before the gate still demanding entrance, with many threats of what he would do if Macduff was not given up to him.

“Do you see,” she said, “yon white sail upon the sea? Yonder goes Macduff to the court of England. You will never see him again, till he comes back with young Prince Malcolm, to pull you down from the throne, and to put you to death. You will never be able to put your yoke, as you threatened, on the Thane of Fife’s neck.”

Some say that Macbeth was so much enraged at this bold answer, that he and his guards attacked the castle and took it, killing the brave lady and all whom they found there.

There reigned at that time in England a very good king, called Edward the Confessor. Prince Malcolm, the son of Duncan, was at his court, soliciting assistance to recover the Scottish throne. The arrival of Macduff greatly aided the success of his petition; for the English King knew that Macduff was a brave and a wise man. As he assured Edward that the Scots were tired of the cruel Macbeth, and would join Prince Malcolm if

he were to return to his country at the head of an army, the king ordered the Earl of Northumberland to enter Scotland with a large force and assist Prince Malcolm in the recovery of his father's crown.

Then it happened just as Macduff had said; for the Scottish thanes and nobles would not fight for Macbeth, but joined Prince Malcolm and Macduff against him; so that at length he shut himself up in his castle of Dunsinane, where he thought himself safe, according to the old women's prophecy, until Birnam Wood should come against him. He boasted of this to his followers, and encouraged them to make a valiant defence, assuring them of certain victory. At this time Malcolm and Macduff were come as far as Birnam Wood, and lay encamped there with their army. The next morning, when they were to march across the broad valley to attack the castle of Dunsinane, Macduff advised that every soldier should cut down a bough of a tree and carry it in his hand, that the enemy might not be able to see how many men were coming against them.

Now, the sentinel who stood on Macbeth's castle wall, when he saw all these branches which the soldiers of Prince Malcolm carried, ran to the king, and informed him that the wood of Birnam

was moving towards the castle of Dunsinane. The King at first called him a liar, and threatened to



put him to death ; but when he looked from the walls himself, and saw the appearance of a forest approaching from Birnam, he knew the hour of his destruction was come. His followers, too, began to be disheartened and to fly

from the castle, seeing their master had lost all hopes.

Macbeth, however, recollected his own bravery, and sallied desperately out at the head of the few followers who remained faithful to him. He was killed, after a furious resistance, fighting hand to hand with Macduff in the thick of the battle. Prince Malcolm mounted the throne of Scotland, and reigned long and prosperously. He rewarded Macduff by declaring that his descendants should lead the vanguard of the Scottish army in battle, and place the crown on the king's head at the ceremony of coronation. King Malcolm also created the thanes of Scotland earls, after the title of dignity adopted in the court of England.

—SIR WALTER SCOTT.



TO Adam Gordon's gloomy haunt
 Prince Edward wound his way:
 "And could I meet that bold outlaw
 In the wold where he doth lay!

"For he hath harried merry Hampshire,
 And many a spoil possessed;
 A bolder outlaw than this wight
 Ne'er trod by east or west.

“And now come on, my merry men all,
Nor heed the dreary way;
For could I meet that bold outlaw
Full soon I would him slay.”

Then spake a knight: “It may be long
Ere Gordon you shall find,
For he doth dwell in a weary haunt
Remote from humankind.

“Among the wolds and deep morass
His lodging he hath ta'en;
And never that wand'ring wight went in
That e'er came out again.”

Prince Edward drew his dark-brown sword
And shook his shining lance:
“And rather I'd fight this bold outlaw
Than all the peers of France.”

Prince Edward grasped his buckler strong
And proudly marchèd forth:
“And rather I'd conquer this bold outlaw
Than all the knights o' the north.”

And then bespake a valiant knight:
“Now, prince, thy words make good,
For yonder I see that bold outlaw
A coming forth the wood.”

Then quick the prince lit off his steed,
And onward wound his way ;
“Now stand ye by, my merry men all,
And ye shall see brave play.”

Brave Adam o' Gordon saw the prince
As he came forth the wold,
And soon he knew him by his shield
And his banners all of gold.

“Arouse !” he cried, “my merry men all,
And stand ye well your ground,
For yonder great Prince Edward comes,
For valor so renowned.”

“Now, welcome, welcome, Adam Gordon ;
I'm glad I have thee found,
For many a day I've sought for thee
Thro' all the country round.”

“Now here I swear,” brave Adam cried,
“Had I but been so told,
I would have met thee long ere now,
In city or in wold.”

Oh ! then began as fierce a fight
As e'er was fought in field ;
The prince was stout, the outlaw strong,
Their hearts with courage steeled.

Full many a warrior stood around
That marvellous fight to see,
While from their wounds the gushing blood
Ran like the fountain free.

Thrice they agreed, o'erspent with toil,
To cease their sturdy blows,
And thrice they stopped to quench their thirst
And wipe their bloody brows.

"Adam, thy valor charms my soul;
I ever love the brave,
And tho' I fear not thy dread sword,
Thy honor I would save.

"Here, Gordon, do I plight my hand,
My honor and renown,
That if thou to my sword wilt yield
And my allegiance own ;

"But, more, if thou wilt be my friend,
And faithful share my heart,
I'll ever prove gentle unto thee—
We never more will part.

"Thou, in the raging battle's hour,
Shalt aye fight by my side,
And at my table and my court
In times of peace preside.

“When prosperous fate shall gild my throne,
Thou shalt partake my joy;
When troubles lower, to soothe thy prince
Shall be thy sole employ.

“And I to thee the same will prove,
A gentle, bosom friend,
In joy to share thy happiness,
In woe thy cares to attend.

“Now, Adam, take thy lasting choice;
Thy prince awaits thy word:
Accept, brave man, my smile or frown,
My friendship or my sword.”

Brave Adam, struck with wonder, gazed—
He sighed at every word;
Then, falling quick upon his knee,
He gave the prince his sword.

Upon the warrior's dark-brown cheek
A tear was seen to shine;
He laid his hand upon his heart—
“Brave Edward, I am thine.”

The pitying prince the warrior raised,
And pressed him to his heart;
“Adam, thy prince will be thy friend—
We never more will part.”

A shouting from their followers by
Proclaimed the joyful sound;
The hills and woodlands, echoing loud,
Dispersed the tidings round.

The prince then made that brave outlaw
On his own steed to ride,
With banners rich and trappings gay,
And he rode by his side.

Where'er the royal Edward fought,
Brave Gordon aye would wend;
And Edward, like a noble prince,
Was ever Gordon's friend.

—EVANS'S COLLECTION.

WILLIAM TELL.

I.

IN the very heart of the little Republic of Switzerland are three states or "cantons," which are known as Forest Cantons, and are famous in the world's history.

When the Romans crossed the Alps about two thousand years ago, they found in these cantons a hardy race of mountaineers, who, though only

peasants, were free men and proud of their independence. The cantons became allies of Rome, and in time part of the empire, but they retained the right to elect their own officers every year and to govern themselves.

The Roman Empire declined, the states of Middle Europe fell into the power of many petty princes, or were overrun by the barbarians, but these three cantons remained free. They were of too little importance to attract those who were contending for possession of the rich valleys below. Thus, for century after century, the mountaineers lived and prospered in their simple way, undisturbed by the rest of the world. They tilled their soil, tended their flocks, and were content because they were free. The young had no higher aim in life than to imitate the virtues of their parents, and the old were careful to instil into the young a love of God, of home, and of liberty.

The Hapsburg family, whose home was in a canton in the Rhine valley, grew very rich, and in time acquired large tracts of land in the Forest Cantons as well as elsewhere.

One of the Hapsburgs, named Albert, finally became Duke of Austria. With his armies he crushed out all resistance in the valley and made his power absolute. Learning that the people of

the three Forest Cantons maintained their own government and exulted in their freedom, he believed that his authority was defied. So he sent a governor named Gessler with a large body of soldiers to bring the poor farmers and shepherds under subjection. This man took up his abode at Altorf, the principal village in the three cantons.

Gessler was in every way fitted to be a tyrant; he had a restless spirit, a violent temper, and a soul that delighted in deeds of cruelty. Under such a man acts of tyranny were of every-day occurrence. If the people complained of any outrage committed by the soldiers, the complaint was treated with derision, if not punished as a crime.

Among the mountaineers none was hardier or braver than William Tell. He was a head taller than his tallest companions. His foot was as firm as that of the chamois, which he delighted to chase to the icy mountain-tops. So skilful was he with the crossbow that no archer was bold enough to compete with him. When the eagle had escaped the shafts of his companions, his arrow would bring down the noble bird. His stalwart figure and dignified bearing overawed strangers, and it is said that one of the duke's tax-collectors, meeting him on a narrow mountain pass, crouched in a crevice of the rocks and left the entire footpath for him. A

man like this was fitted to be a leader. His was the mind that conceived a plan for freeing his country; his was the voice that roused his countrymen to action; and his was the arm that struck the first blow for liberty.

From the moment of Gessler's arrival Tell foresaw the misery that was to follow. He knew there would be work for brave hearts and willing



hands. He talked with some of the principal men of the three cantons, and to them he unfolded his plans. Secret meetings were held, and every effort was used

to rouse from their despair his broken-hearted countrymen. Before a year had passed spears, swords, and battle-axes were secured and distributed, and the mountaineers only waited the signal from Tell to rise against their oppressors. The Austrian tax-collectors in the cantons had no suspicion of what was being done. They looked upon the people as little more than cattle, and incapable of taking up arms against the trained troops of Austria, and, poor and needy as the mountaineers were, there was not a traitor among them all.

Gessler himself felt secure in his tyranny. His arrogance took such possession of him that he began to insist on public honor being paid to his authority. He placed his * hat on the top of a high pole in the market-place at Altorf, and gave orders that every one who passed should uncover the head and bend the knee. "The least murmur," said the tyrant, "the smallest opposition, must be punished with chains." The patriots were indignant, but they submitted. They knew that the day for the uprising was near at hand, and were all the more careful to obey the orders of the tyrant.

II.

One day Tell came to Altorf, and entered the market-place, holding his young son by the hand.

* According to some writers it was the duke's hat.

The remarkable order of Gessler had not reached Tell, and he knew not what to think as he saw the soldiers guarding in silence the pole on which was the embroidered hat of the tyrant; he was filled with amazement. But when he saw the citizens of Altorf bowing down before the hat and the soldiers using their spears to force the citizens to bend still lower, he could hardly restrain himself.

The guards soon noticed the man who alone stood while all around knelt before the hat. They were at his side in a moment.

“Take off your cap!” cried they, “and bend the knee before the emblem of imperial power!”

“I bend the knee to God alone, and His is the only power that I adore,” said Tell.

He was instantly seized, and his son was torn from him. He was dragged before the governor, and an account of the incident in the market-place was given. Tell regarded his accusers with scorn, and made no answer to their charges. His calm demeanor and majestic appearance astonished and appalled Gessler, who was seized with a presentiment that the man standing before him had come to avenge his crimes. He did not dare to speak, and dreaded even to look at the prisoner. At last, seeing that his silence was noticed by the soldiers, he made a great effort to recover himself, and said :

“Why didst thou refuse to show me the respect which is due me? Speak, if thou canst say aught in thy defence, and remember that if I have the power to punish I have also the power to pardon.”

At these words Tell looked calmly at his questioner, and replied :

“Punish me, but ask me not to tell my thoughts. Thou canst not listen to the truth.”

“I can listen to the truth if it has aught to instruct me. Speak!” said the governor.

“Listen, since thou hast commanded me to speak,” said Tell. “The cries of the innocent whom thou hast punished, the voices of the widows and orphans whose husbands and fathers have perished at thy hands, have cried to Heaven for vengeance. The Lord has prepared His thunderbolt. It will soon strike thee, and my country shall be free. I have refused to debase myself in the market-place before the emblem of thy pride. Now I call thee tyrant to thy face, and I await my death.”

A dreadful silence succeeded Tell’s words. Gessler could scarcely believe his ears.

The tyrant soon roused himself, however, and began to consider how he might humble the man who had the hardihood to defy him to his face. Such a man must be tortured in some extraordinary way. So, instead of expressing any anger, Gess-

ler feigned admiration, and as if wishing to make a friend of him, began to question him. Tell briefly answered each question, and finally, when asked his name, replied: "William Tell!" That name, so well known in Altorf, startled Gessler, but he concealed his agitation.

"What!" said he; "art thou the Tell whose skill in guiding a boat is so famous, and whose arrow has never been known to miss its aim?"

"I am he," replied Tell, "and I blush that my name is known only for exploits of no value to my country."

At this moment Tell's son was brought in, and with a glad cry the boy sprang into his father's arms. Here was Gessler's opportunity for the fiendish vengeance he desired to wreak on the bold patriot.

"Listen to what I have determined," said Gessler. "I desire, while punishing thy insolence, to pay a tribute to that skill which is the pride of thy country. If thine arrow can at a hundred paces cleave an apple on thy son's head, I will pardon thee, and thou with thy son shalt go thy way. But if thou refuse the trial, let both prepare for instant execution."

"I will not accept this trial!" cried Tell. "Lead me to death."

“Not only thyself, but thy son as well,” said the tyrant.

“What! kill this innocent boy? What a fiend thou art! My boy! O Gessler, hear me! Thy guards, the example of my poor countrymen, the certainty of death, have not made me bow to the emblem of thy power. But I am now ready to prostrate myself before thee, tyrant as thou art, if thou wilt spare my boy.”

“Thou canst save both him and thyself,” calmly said the governor.

“And kill my boy with mine own hand? Dost thou think I could steadily aim the arrow at an apple on the head of my boy, when a slight mischance would cause his death?” exclaimed Tell.

“Ah, no! Kill me, but spare my son!”

“Father,” said the boy, “do not humble thyself before this tyrant. I am willing to accept the trial, for I trust thy skill. Heaven will direct thy hand, and I shall not be injured. Let them lead us to the spot, and thou shalt make the trial at once.”

Tell gazed on his son for some time without a word. Then suddenly raising his head, he turned to Gessler and exclaimed: “I will obey! Let me make the trial at once!”

Gessler made a sign, and the guards surrounded the prisoners and prepared to lead them forth.

III.

News of the terrible trial of skill had gone abroad, and a great crowd assembled in the market-place. The eyes of the women were filled with tears and the hearts of the men throbbed with sympathy, but not a word came from their lips, as they gazed on Tell and his boy.

The ground was quickly measured and a double line of soldiers was drawn up. At the further end of the space young Tell calmly knelt, and the apple was placed on his head. Just behind Tell stood Gessler, surrounded by his guards.

The patriot stood motionless as a statue. His bow and one arrow were handed to him. He tried the point and broke it.

“Bring my quiver,” said he, “and let me select my own arrow.”

The quiver was brought and laid on the ground. The despairing father, bending over, quickly concealed an arrow in his bosom, and then, fitting another to his bow, stood erect.

A hush fell on the multitude.

Twice he raised his bow to shoot, but each time the sight of his boy's fair, young face unnerved his arm. He tried to accustom his eye to look only at

the apple and not at his boy. At last the moment came when he saw only the apple. There was the twang of a bowstring—the flash of an arrow through the air—and the apple was pierced through the



core. The shout that rose from the crowd echoed and re-echoed from the hills around. But Tell heard nothing. He stood, unable to return the joyous caresses of the boy, who had run to his father's arms.

Thinking his father was about to faint, the boy loosened Tell's vest, and an arrow fell to the ground.

Gessler's quick eye saw the arrow, and he thus addressed Tell:

"Thy countrymen have not too highly praised thy skill. I shall keep my promise and set thee free. But why didst thou conceal this arrow?"

Tell had now recovered himself. At the tyrant's voice, he turned and replied:

"Had my boy been slain, this arrow would have pierced thy heart, thou tyrant!"

Gessler stepped back in terror at these words, and ordered Tell to be bound in chains and cast into prison. The boy was torn from his father and permitted to go free.

IV.

Young Tell, unable to join his father, was taken in and cared for by some of the citizens of Altorf. These people knew of the plans already set on foot by Tell for the liberation of his country. They knew that the patriots had agreed to arm themselves and assemble on a given signal.

The usual mode of signalling from one mountain settlement to another was to kindle a huge bonfire. So a guide was appointed to go to Tell's village with the boy, and light the signal-fire. This would call the patriots to arms, and bring them to Altorf, where they could overpower the guards and release

Tell. The boy, intelligent beyond his years, was but too glad to accompany the guide.

After a tedious journey they arrived at Tell's home. As soon as darkness fell the signal-fire was kindled, and flame after flame in answer to the summons blazed forth from the neighboring mountain-tops.

When the mountaineers saw the signal-lights they thought the hour had come to strike a blow for liberty. They had perfect confidence in Tell, and believed the signal came from him. The men on each separate mountain seized their arms and hurried to their meeting-place. Soon in the gathering darkness a band from every hamlet of the three cantons began the march to Altorf. They were clad in goat-skins, and armed only with spears or crossbows; but every man was a patriot and every heart was strong with a resolve to drive the hated Austrian from the land.

Gessler was soon warned of the danger that threatened. His sentinels hurried to him with the news that signal-fires were blazing on all the mountains. He trembled for his own safety and for the control of the province.

He decided to take advantage of the darkness and to go at once in person for reinforcements, intending to return and crush to the dust the people who had dared to rise against him. The only way

to go was by Lake Lucerne, a beautiful sheet of water, lying among the mountains and stretching many miles to the northward. Accordingly, he ordered a boat to be made ready. He determined to take his prisoner with him to his castle at the lower end of the lake, to dungeons from which there would be little chance of escape. Tell was brought forth, loaded with chains and strongly guarded, and was placed in the boat. Gessler seated himself at the prow and gave the command to go forward.

The night was calm, the stars shone brightly, and the boat fairly flew through the water. The upper lake was soon left behind, and the strait which leads into the second lake was passed. As the open water beyond was reached a strong breeze arose, but it only sent the boat more rapidly forward.

As Tell lay in the bottom of the boat he saw a red light on a neighboring hill. Soon he saw another, and another, until it seemed as though every hill had its shining beacon, and he wondered who had given the signal that was to be given by him alone.

Suddenly, as the boat was in the deepest waters of the lake, the breeze increased to a gale. At the same time a furious wind came roaring down the mountain, sending high the waves on either side of the vessel. The mast was broken and the sail fell.

In spite of the efforts of the helmsman, the boat was driven sidewise toward the rocky coast, where it surely would be dashed to pieces.

It seemed as though no human effort could save the vessel, and the rowers in despair ceased to struggle and held the oars idly in their hands. Gessler threatened, begged, offered rich rewards, but the rowers could not regain control of the boat.

In the midst of the tumult Tell lay in the boat and calmly awaited death. He was content, and even smiled at the thought that the tyrant must also die.

At length one of the boatmen cried out: "We can no longer steer the boat among the waves. The only man who can save us is here—Tell, the most skilful boatman in all Switzerland. Set him free, and beg him to save us."

Gessler hesitated, for his hatred of Tell was nearly as strong as his love of life; but the entreaties, murmurs, and even threats of his companions, as well as the increasing tempest, urged him to a decision.

"Strike off his fetters," said he; "I pardon all his crimes on condition that he bring us safely into port."

As his chains fell off, Tell arose and silently seized the helm. He turned the head of the boat with the greatest ease, and the boatmen again bent to their oars. The storm raged, and lashed the waves into fury; but they did not seem to

impede the progress of the vessel, now that the master hand of Tell was on the helm.



There was but one direction in which the boat could safely go, and that was back toward Altorf.

Tell was steering the boat in that direction. In the darkness and the storm Gessler did not perceive this. He did not notice when the boat passed through the narrow strait and re-entered the upper lake; but Tell recognized the mountains of Uri.

The storm was subsiding, but the waves were still running high as the dawn broke, and Altorf was seen in the distance. Gessler, seeing where he was, demanded fiercely why Tell had brought him back to Altorf.

Instead of replying, Tell pushed the boat against a rock towards which he had been steering, and seizing a bow and arrow leaped upon the rock. This rock projected over the water, and has ever since been called "Tellsplatte." From it he sprang to another rock on the shore, and stood in an attitude of defiance.

With a cry of fury, Gessler commanded his men to land and follow Tell. As they strove to reach the shore, the body of Gessler was left unprotected. This gave Tell the opportunity which his quick mind had foreseen. In an instant his arrow had pierced Gessler's heart, and the tyrant fell back in the boat, dead.*

Before the guards could recover from their amaze-

* According to some authorities, Gessler was not shot in the boat, but subsequently in a mountain pass.

ment, Tell had disappeared. As he flew towards Altorf, he heard cries and the sound of arms. He reached the market-place to find it occupied by the patriotic mountaineers. As soon as Tell was seen, a great shout went up and echoed among the mountains. "He is our leader, and his commands alone will we obey!"

"My countrymen," said Tell, "the tyrant Gessler is no more. Our country is avenged, but it is not yet free. It will not be free so long as there remains a single stone of the fortress that shelters the Austrian troops. Let us hasten to begin the attack."

He seized in his left hand the standard of Uri, and, grasping a battle-axe in his right hand, sped with his men toward the mountain on which stood the Austrian fortress.

A cloud of arrows fell from the ramparts. But one party of besiegers had found a gate that was not well guarded. This they soon forced open, and rushed in. As the Austrians turned to meet the foe now within their walls, another gate was battered down, and Tell entered at the head of his men.

The Austrians were now ready to yield up the fort, and the standard of Tell's canton of Uri was soon waving over the battlements.

After bidding the brave mountaineers return thanks to God for their great success, Tell said :

“Comrades, retain your simple ways. Rely upon God and yourselves. Let no tyrant conquer you. Fear, equally with the tyrant from abroad, the tyrant who may rise from your own ranks. Labor virtuously and courageously, and you will become the admiration of future generations.”

This victory was followed by others, till, a few years later, after the signal victory at the pass of Morgarten, in 1315, the independence of the three cantons was recognized. Later, other cantons joined the confederacy, other victories were gained over the Austrians, and finally the independence of Switzerland was accomplished.

A LEGEND OF BREGENZ.*

GIRT round with rugged mountains
The fair Lake Constance lies ;
In her blue heart reflected,
Shine back the starry skies ;

* Bregenz (*pron.* brä'ghents), picturesquely situated on the east shore of Lake Constance, is a town of the Tyrol (*pron.* tir'ol), a province of Austria, adjoining Switzerland on the east. It is on the site of the old Roman Brigantium. It was for several centuries one of the chief fortified places of southern Europe. In 1646 the Swedes stormed and captured the fortress.

And watching each white cloudlet
Float silently and slow,
You think a piece of heaven
Lies on our earth below.

Midnight is there; and silence,
Enthroned in Heaven, looks down
Upon her own calm mirror,
Upon a sleeping town:
For Bregenz, that quaint city
Upon the Tyrol shore,
Has stood above Lake Constance
A thousand years and more.

Her battlements and towers,
Upon their rocky steep,
Have cast their trembling shadow
For ages on the deep;
Mountain, and lake, and valley
A sacred legend know
Of how the town was saved one night
Three hundred years ago.

Far from her home and kindred
A Tyrol maid had fled,
To serve in the Swiss valleys,
And toil for daily bread;

And every year that fled
So silently and fast,
Seemed to bear farther from her
The memory of the Past.

She served kind, gentle masters,
Nor asked for rest or change;
Her friends seemed no more new ones,
Their speech seemed no more strange;
And when she led her cattle
To pasture every day,
She ceased to look and wonder
On which side Bregenz lay.

She spoke no more of Bregenz
With longing and with tears;
Her Tyrol home seemed faded
In a deep mist of years;
She heeded not the rumors
Of Austrian war or strife;
Each day she rose contented
To the calm toils of life.

Yet, when her master's children
Would clustering round her stand,
She sang them the old ballads
Of her own native land;

And when at morn and evening
She knelt before God's throne,
The accents of her childhood
Rose to her lips alone.

And so she dwelt : the valley
More peaceful year by year ;
When suddenly strange portents
Of some great deed seemed near.
The golden corn was bending
Upon its fragile stalk,
While farmers, heedless of their fields,
Paced up and down in talk.

The men seemed stern and altered,
With looks cast on the ground ;
With anxious faces, one by one,
The women gathered round ;
All talk of flax, or spinning,
Or work was put away ;
The very children seemed afraid
To go alone to play.

One day, out in the meadow
With strangers from the town,
Some secret plan discussing,
The men walked up and down ;

Yet, now and then seemed watching
A strange, uncertain gleam,
That looked like lances 'mid the trees
That stood below the stream.

At eve they all assembled,
All care and doubt were fled;
With jovial laugh they feasted,
The board was nobly spread.
The elder of the village
Rose up, his glass in hand,
And cried, "We drink the downfall
Of an accursed land!

"The night is growing darker;
Ere one more day is flown
Bregenz, our foeman's stronghold,
Bregenz shall be our own!"
The women shrank in terror,
(Yet Pride, too, had her part),
But one poor Tyrol maiden
Felt death within her heart.

Before her stood fair Bregenz,
Once more her towers arose;
What were the friends beside her?
Only her country's foes!

The faces of her kinsfolk,
The days of childhood flown,
The echoes of her mountains,
Reclaimed her as their own!

Nothing she heard around her
(Though shouts rang forth again);
Gone were the green Swiss valleys,
The pasture, and the plain;
Before her eyes one vision,
And in her heart one cry,
That said, "Go forth, save Bregenz,
And then, if need be, die!"

With trembling haste and breathless,
With noiseless step she sped;
Horses and weary cattle
Were standing in the shed;
She loosed the strong white charger
That fed from out her hand;
She mounted and she turned his head
Towards her native land.

Out—out into the darkness—
Faster, and still more fast;
The smooth grass flies behind her,
The chestnut wood is past;

She looks up; clouds are heavy:

Why is her steed so slow?

Scarcely the wind beside them

Can pass them as they go.

“Faster!” she cries, “O faster!”

Eleven the church bells chime;

“O God,” she cries, “help Bregenz,

And bring me there in time!”

But louder than bells ringing,

Or lowing of the kine,

Grows nearer in the midnight

The rushing of the Rhine.

Shall not the roaring waters

Their headlong gallop check?

The steed draws back in terror;

She leans above his neck

To watch the flowing darkness;

The bank is high and steep.

One pause—he staggers forward,

And plunges in the deep.

She strives to pierce the blackness,

And looser throws the rein;

Her steed must breast the waters

That dash above his mane.

How gallantly, how nobly,
He struggles through the foam,
And see—in the far distance
Shine out the lights of home!



Up the steep bank he bears her,
And now they rush again
Towards the heights of Bregenz,
That tower above the plain.
They reach the gate of Bregenz
Just as the midnight rings,
And out come serf and soldier
To meet the news she brings.

Bregenz is saved ! Ere daylight
Her battlements are manned ;
Defiance greets the army
That marches on the land.
And if to deeds heroic
Should endless fame be paid,
Bregenz does well to honor
The noble Tyrol maid.

Three hundred years are vanished,
And yet upon the hill
An old stone gateway rises
To do her honor still.
And there, when Bregenz women
Sit spinning in the shade,
They see in quaint old carving
The Charger and the Maid.

And when, to guard old Bregenz,
By gateway, street, and tower,
The warder paces all night long,
And calls each passing hour:
“Nine,” “ten,” “eleven,” he cries aloud,
And then (O crown of Fame !),
When midnight pauses in the skies,
He calls the maiden’s name !

—ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

RICHARD, THE LION-HEARTED.

I.

ONE fine day in autumn, in the year 1193, three men, bearing in their hands branches of palm and dressed as pilgrims who had come from the Holy Land, entered a little village not far from Vienna.

They seemed worn with toil and travel, and they had allowed their hair and beards to grow to a great length.

One of these palmers was very tall and well proportioned. Every movement showed the great strength of his limbs, but he was no less graceful than powerful. His eyes were blue and bright, and his hair was of a color between red and auburn. As he strode along, his gait and gestures made him appear more like a monarch than a meek and pious pilgrim.



In travelling from town to town, the palmers,

instead of begging alms, spent their money freely. Moreover, they took pains to avoid the castles and palaces of the great, the very places which other pilgrims most anxiously sought.

Arriving at the village, they stopped at the miserable inn, instead of proceeding to Vienna, where the best food and lodging were to be had. As soon as they entered the hovel, one of them took from his scrip a noble goose. This was placed on the spit, and the cooking was directed by the tall palmer himself. The travellers brought out their own flagons, but they paid the host as much as though they had purchased the wine he so highly recommended.

Their gayety during the meal again belied their garb, and they ate and drank heartily indeed. When they had finished their meal, the tall palmer became serious, and said: "We must be wary—we are watched. The Duke, you know, loves me not; and were I to fall into his hands, it would be long ere I should see merry old England again. That minstrel who trod so closely on our heels is a spy, I warrant ye; for his features and accent, however he may try to disguise them, prove him to be English. Nevertheless, here we are, with hearty good cheer before us, and, reverend pilgrims though we be, the stirrup-cup and the song must not be forgotten."

Whilst the palmers were singing their lay, a min-

strel entered the room, and, placing himself at its farthest extremity, leaned upon his harp, and gazed intently at them.

There was a mixture of cunning and malignity in the expression of his countenance as he scanned the features of the tall palmer. When the song was concluded he rose, and, approaching the festive board, bowed respectfully. The palmers started as if they had seen a spectre. "Ha!" said one of them, "'tis the spy minstrel! What wouldst thou with us, man? We are palmers, and it would ill accord us to listen to the profane ditties of a wandering minstrel."

"Nay," said the minstrel, "I know many a lay to which your ears, holy fathers, might listen with pious pleasure. I can tell you of the exploits of good knights in the Holy Land, of holy Peter the Hermit, of the noble Godfrey, and of brave King Richard of England."

"Nay, nay," said the tall palmer, hastily; "begone, I pray thee; we have our devotions to perform, and must retire early to our humble beds that we may be stirring betimes in the morning."

"Ye are indeed churlish," said the minstrel, "and ye shall remember to your cost that ye gave the minstrel neither meat nor drink, and would not listen to his ditty."

Then the minstrel took up his harp, and with a look of defiance left the apartment. The palmers, thus left to themselves, retired to rest.

As the tall palmer slept, a thousand visions of a thousand things presented themselves to his mind in dreams. War and tumult, triumph, imprisonment, and dominion, occupied his imagination by turns. He dreamed that he was entering a great city amidst the acclamations of thousands; warriors and statesmen hailed him as their lord; a disloyal and treacherous brother was at his feet, craving pardon and expressing penitence; and the mother he loved so well laid a hand upon his arm. But the touch seemed heavy and violent, and he awoke with a start, to find himself in the grasp of an armed man.

He shook off his assailant and, clenching his hand, aimed so tremendous a blow that it felled the intruder to the ground. But the apartment was full of armed men, and the two other palmers were secured and bound.

Not wishing to encounter the gigantic strength which had laid low their leader, no one dared to advance.

"'Tis he whom we seek," said one of them, "for no other man could have aimed a blow like that; but close round him; we are surely too numerous, and too well armed, to be daunted by one man."

The tall palmer defended himself for some time ; but two men, stealing behind him, threw a chain over his shoulders and bound his arms fast. Seeing that he was overcome, the palmer began to remonstrate.

“What mean ye?” said he. “What kind of men are ye to assault three poor palmers who are travelling on their way from the Holy Land?”

“Nay, nay,” said the minstrel, stepping forth ; “they are no palmers ; and when my lord recovers from the effect of that blow, he will recognize in this man a person whom he has met before.”

The man whom the palmer had stricken to the ground was now recovering, and the minstrel, assisting him to his feet, said :

“My lord, once more behold this man, and say if the tale that I told thee is true.”

The Duke approached the palmer, and each by the glare of the torches gazed on the other, and beheld the features of his most deadly foe.

“’Tis Richard of England !” said the Duke ; “the betrayer of the Christian cause, the assassin of Conrad, the friend of usurpers and of infidels !”

“Leopold of Austria,” said Richard, “thou art a liar and a coward ! Unfetter but one of these hands, and then repeat what thou hast said, if thou darest.”

“Away with the King,” said Leopold; “if *he* may be called a king whose brother wears his crown, and who is prisoner to a duke.”

The princely Richard was borne away and thrown into a dungeon. Thus, through the offices of a spy in the employ of Richard’s treacherous brother John, Leopold had in his power the man who had insulted him at the siege of Acre, when both were fighting to rescue the Holy Land from the Saracens.

II.

Richard, before his departure on the crusade, had declared that Arthur, the son of his deceased brother, should succeed to the throne. John immediately on his brother’s departure set about to secure the throne for himself. Many were the intrigues and quarrels between those who remained loyal to the King and his plans, and those who favored John. At length, the citizens of London took the oath of allegiance to John, but only for so long as Richard should be absent from England. John had employed spies to take service in the army of his brother, and to prevent his return by every means in their power short of killing him.

But the fears of John and the hopes of the people were aroused by the news that Richard was on his

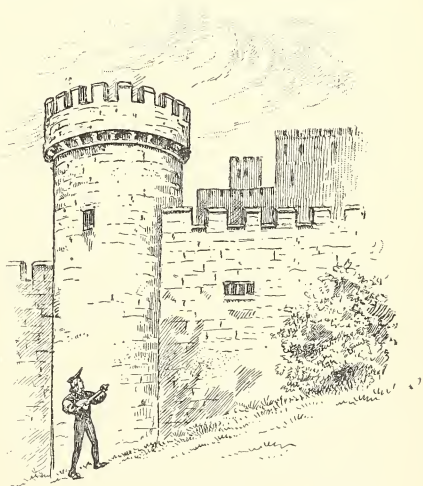
way back to England. The expectation of the public was disappointed. News gave way to rumors; and at last nothing whatever could be learned of the brave Richard. But the loving heart of Blondel, his favorite minstrel, discovered the whereabouts of the king.

Blondel knew that Richard had determined to travel almost unattended, and had assumed the garb of a pilgrim, in order to cross the continent of Europe unknown and elude the snares of his enemies.

The minstrel waited long for news of his master, and at last resolved to search for him.

After months of weary travel over central Europe, as the minstrel was one day singing under the walls of a German castle he was delighted to hear his ballad taken up and concluded by a voice from within.

He recognized the voice of Richard, and he knew that his search was at an end. In vain did Blondel endeavor to obtain an interview. He gained ad-



mission to the castle, but was unable by bribe or persuasion to get near the master whom he so longed to see.

Lingering beneath the castle walls one day, and singing one of the airs that Richard loved, the King from his prison took up the air and sang :

“’Tis he ! thy prince—long sought, long lost ;
The leader of the Red Cross host !
’Tis he ! to none thy joy betray ;
Young troubadour ! away, away !
Away to the island of the brave,
The gem on the bosom of the wave ;
Arouse the sons of the noble soil
To win their lion from the toil ;
And free the wassail cup shall flow ;
Bright in each hall the hearth shall glow ;
The festal board shall be richly crowned,
While knights and chieftains banquet round ;
And a thousand harps with joy shall ring,
When merry England hails her King !”

Blondel lost no time, but set out at once. Wherever he could find a listening and sympathetic ear, he sang the story of the King’s captivity. Europe was startled to learn that one of the champions of Christendom was languishing in prison. In his fear for the safety of his prisoner, Leopold sold him to Henry, Emperor of Germany. The Emperor lodged

Richard, loaded with chains, in one of the castles of the Tyrol, and surrounded him with trusty guards, who with drawn swords attended him by day and watched at his bedside by night.

III.

As it became known throughout the German Empire that King Richard of England was in the custody of the Emperor, there spread exaggerated reports of the captive's personal prowess. Among those who listened to these reports with great impatience was the Emperor's only son, Prince Arthur, the bravest knight and the strongest man in Germany. The stories of the feats of Richard excited his jealousy, and he longed for an opportunity to try his strength with the captive monarch.

The English, by this time, had made offers of large ransom for the liberation of their King, and Prince Arthur urged his father to release Richard; but to no purpose. The noble prince desired to see him at liberty, not only because of sympathy for the unmerited sufferings of the prisoner, but that they might meet on equal terms, and try fully and fairly the strength of their respective arms.

At length, he became so impatient of delay that he won the Emperor's consent to fix a day for a trial

of prowess. Richard smiled when he received the Prince's challenge, and it was agreed that each should give and receive a blow.

On the day appointed, the Emperor and Empress, with their attendants, assembled in the great hall of the castle to witness the trial of strength.

All gazed with wonder and delight as the King of England entered the hall. His gigantic form, his sinewy limbs, and the haughty, undaunted expression of his features filled the spectators with apprehension for the Prince, who seemed, however, to entertain no fear as to the result.

In outward appearance the two men were nearly matched; the Prince was as tall and muscular as the King; each had sustained the assault of many a celebrated warrior, and had withstood unmoved the blows of the mightiest. Clad in silken tunics, and wearing Oriental turbans on their heads, they stood before each other unarmed.

"Richard of England," said Arthur, "if thou wouldst forbear this trial, acknowledge that thou darest not compete with me, and give me that jewel in thy bonnet in token of acknowledgment."

"Arthur of Austria," replied Richard, "I came not here to prate; and if the Emperor has exhibited me only that he may listen to the vain boastings of his son, the sooner he consigns me back to my dungeon

the better. I am ready to bear thy blow, but I lack both the wit and the spirit to reply to thy taunts."

"Forbear, Arthur, forbear!" said the Empress, "and pursue not this rash quarrel; the King of England is thy superior in strength. Surely a knight like thee may, without discrediting himself, make such an acknowledgment to the most renowned warrior in Christendom!"

"Peace, dearest mother!" said the Prince. "And now, King Richard, look to thyself. Stand firm, or the fame of thy prowess is dimmed forever."

Thus saying, he raised his arm, clenched his hand, and aimed at Richard's head a ponderous blow. The King met the shock with folded arms, and stood seemingly no more disturbed than the sturdy oak in a summer breeze. A cry of admiration rang through the hall.

"Did the Prince strike me?" asked Richard, turning to the spectators. Then again facing the



Prince, he said: "Give me thy hand, young sir; now fare thee well, and may'st thou be more successful in future trials of strength."

"Nay, nay, sir King," said the Prince, detaining him; "this courtesy suits me not. The proud barons of England must not say that their King disdained to try his strength on a German prince. Here stand I, ready to receive thy blow. Thou wilt not! Then I proclaim thee a coward, and no true knight."

The King's face flushed at this insult. He slowly clenched his hand, raised his arm, and, sending a blow with the swiftness of lightning, the Prince fell lifeless to the ground.

"He's slain! he's slain!" cried the Empress; "the cold-hearted Englishman has murdered my boy!"

All crowded round the prostrate body, but every effort failed to restore it to life.

The Empress, overcome with grief, turned to her husband and said: "It is the finger of Heaven; thy wickedness in detaining this King thy prisoner has drawn the wrath of God upon us. Release him, lest a worse evil befall us."

"No!" replied the Emperor. "Away with him! Load him with chains, and cast him into the most loathsome dungeon of the castle!"

The knightly King was thrust into a deep dungeon, into which no ray of sunshine ever entered.

His limbs were loaded with irons, and the scantiest food and drink provided for him.

IV.

Queen Eleanor, the mother of Richard, finally appealed to the Pope, and induced him to threaten the Emperor with excommunication unless the captive were released at once. In alarm, the Emperor agreed that Richard should be tried before the imperial diet of the German Empire.

When Richard was brought before this body, he made such a manly and persuasive answer to the charges brought against him, that the princes of the diet heartily applauded him. The Emperor himself ordered the King's chains to be stricken off, showed him the respect due to a crowned head, and consented to discuss the amount of his ransom.

Richard immediately sent a letter to England announcing the glad news. But the country had been drained of money by the rapacity of John. So the sum agreed on could not be raised at once. The Emperor was slow to conclude the bargain, and his terms rose at each delay. Time dragged on, and it was five months before the agreement was reached. This was, that one hundred thousand pounds should be paid, and that the crown of England should be

resigned to Henry, from whom it should be received by Richard as a vassal of the Empire, with the obligation of a yearly payment of five thousand pounds.

At this juncture, the treacherous John offered to pay the Emperor twenty thousand pounds for every month he should detain Richard in prison. The Emperor was anxious to accept this offer, but the German princes compelled him to release his prisoner. More than seventy thousand pounds were paid the day Richard was released, and hostages were given for the payment of the remainder.

After vexatious delays, Richard landed in England, amidst the acclamations of his subjects. He had been absent more than four years. The treacherous John on his knees implored forgiveness, and at his mother's request he was received into favor, though his lands and castles were confiscated.



